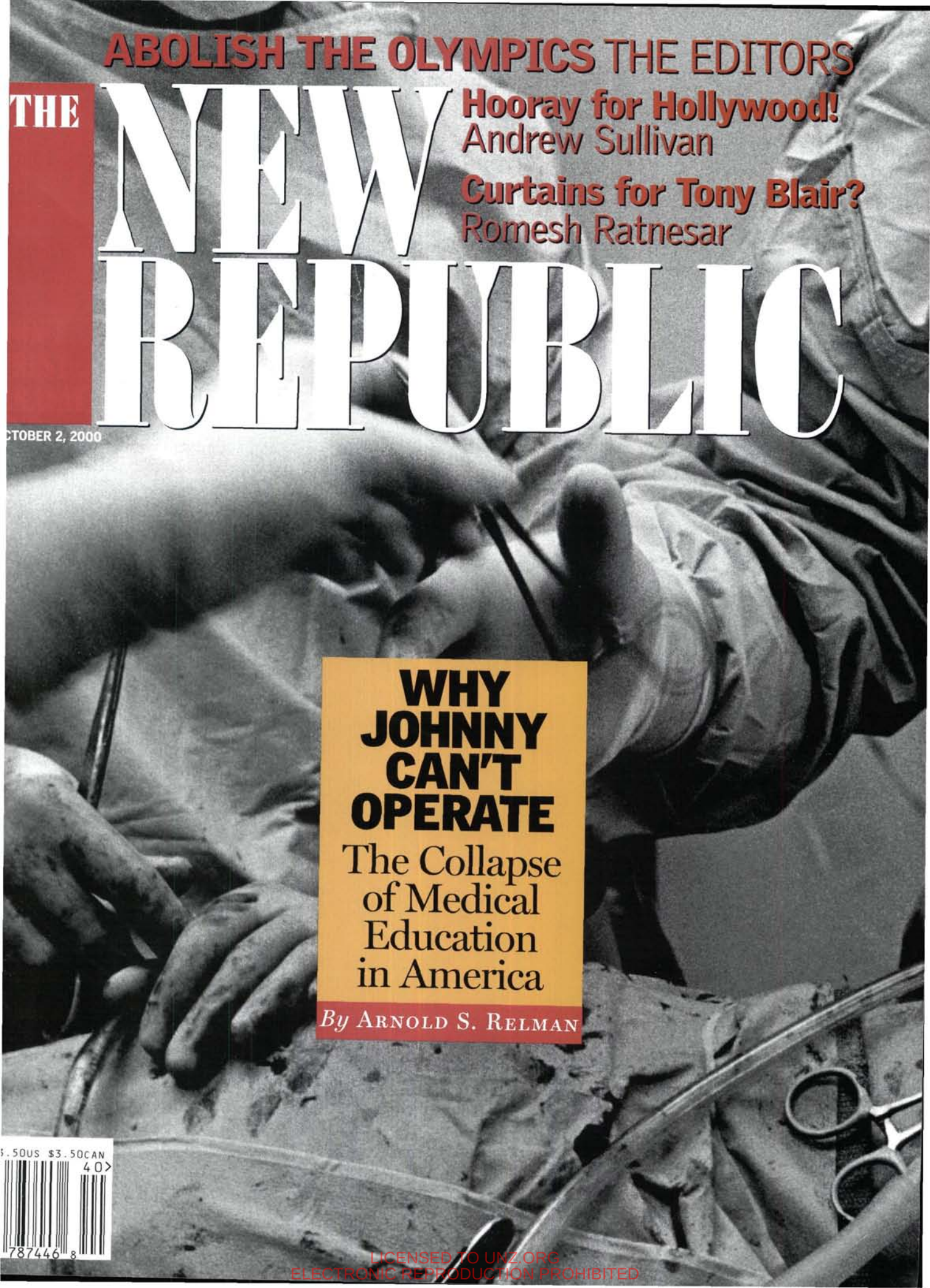

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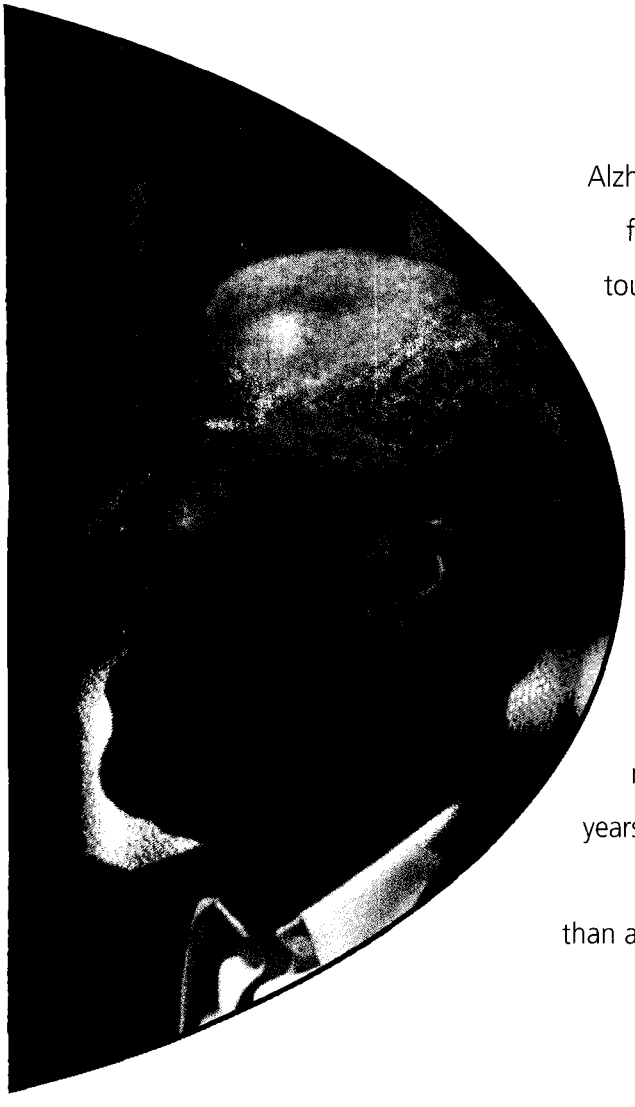

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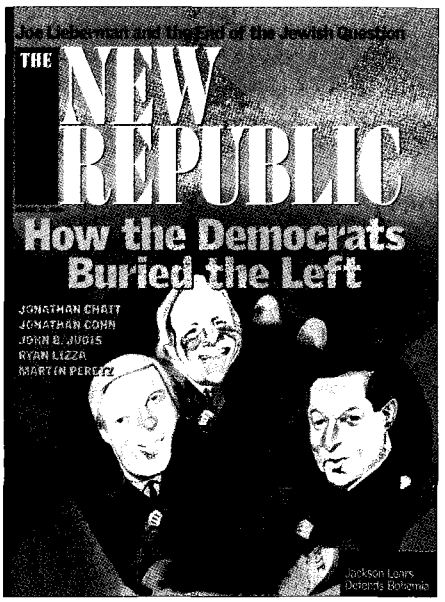
Religion matters

TO THE EDITORS:

It was with great trepidation that I read the following celebratory sentences in your editorial about Al Gore's selection of Joseph Lieberman ("Lieberman," August 21): "The United States is not just another address that is not Zion. America itself is a kind of solution to the torments of otherness that afflicted and nearly destroyed the Jews in Europe." I could not help but remember Eli N. Evans's biography of Judah P. Benjamin, in which Evans enumerated the Spanish Jews in the court of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella: "The queen's confidential secretary was Jewish, as were other court officials and her closest female friend. The general bailiff of Aragon, the grand treasurer, the comptroller general of the royal household, the vice chancellor of the Kingdom of Aragon, and three top military officers under Ferdinand's command all were Jews."

Moreover, American Jews discovered in September 1966, when they dared to cross the Johnson administration on the issue of the Vietnam War, that there are boundaries they may not cross. Furious at



the Jewish leadership's antiwar position, Lyndon Johnson asked Malcolm Tarlov, the commander of the Jewish War Veterans, to explain to other Jewish leaders that if America were forced to abandon SEATO "commitments" in Vietnam, "the less explicit American commitments to Israel would be jeopardized," as well as U.S. support for Soviet Jewry. At first, the shocked Jewish leaders were convinced that Tarlov's statements would be quickly recanted. They were wrong. Johnson refused to back down, despite the international media firestorm that followed. Max Kampelman summed up the incident thus: "The Tarlov incident was a warning shot to the Jewish community to shut up. It could have been a warning shot from a friend . . . and I did not think it had bad consequences." I hope Lieberman's candidacy will not cause the American Jewish leadership to forget this lesson.

DR. JUDITH APTER KLINGHOFFER
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Left field

TO THE EDITORS:

In his article exploring whether American anti-Semitism is sufficiently widespread to hurt the Gore-Lieberman ticket ("Protected Frum," August 21), Franklin Foer misleadingly characterizes Louis Farrakhan's attitude toward Jews as an example of the "anti-Semitism of the left." This is a mistake typical of much contemporary journalism. Farrakhan's views are well-known: He is an anti-Semite and a racist—the very opposite of the "leftist" tradition of universalism and tolerance. His are politics of hate and intolerance.

There may be disagreement about how the left is defined, but Farrakhan's views are not even in the ballpark. Those "on the left," although quite diverse, share such common values as support for economic, racial, and gender equality; democratization of political institutions; civil liberties (such as freedom of expression); civil rights; and labor rights. Farrakhan has no use for labor unions, has never been a serious advocate of civil rights or women's rights, and has nothing to say about campaign finance reform or environmental injustice. When he occasionally articulates a strategy for black economic uplift, he focuses on promoting black entrepreneurship.

The left in contemporary U.S. politics is represented by diverse voices, including those of the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Senator Paul Wellstone, Ralph Nader, Barbara Ehrenreich, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, and many others. Neither Farrakhan's anti-Semitism nor his economic and political program, such that it is, is "left" in any way.

PETER DREIER
Dr. E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics
Occidental College
Los Angeles, California

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Open and shut

TO THE EDITORS:

Yehudah Mirsky's "Openings" (August 21) was notable for what it closed off. Judaism's commitment to life is not as absolute as Mirsky maintains: The imperative to save life irrespective of most of God's commandments applies only, in the first instance, to Jewish life. It is quite lovely to cite Judaic aphorisms proclaiming that saving one life is like saving an entire world. But such proclamations were always understood in the context of Jewish life. It isn't so lovely when this "opening" into the Jewish legal tradition is revealed for what it is.

To be sure, there is a further loophole in the tradition (and this time we must view it as just a loophole) that extends the principle to the lives of other groups in the interest of the "ways of peace" (*darchai shalom* in Hebrew). What would it be like in the modern world for the Jewish doctor to refuse treatment on the Sabbath to one who isn't a fellow member of the "chosen people"? Perhaps Mirsky closed off this line of inquiry in the interest of *darchai shalom*. Peaceful as it may be, it is still pretty disingenuous and does no great service to the Jewish tradition.

ETHAN J. LEIB
New Haven, Connecticut

YEHUDAH MIRSKY REPLIES:

Yes, Jewish law has historically treated Jews and non-Jews differently, to say the least, and any full-bodied scholarly account of the laws of Shabbat (with all due respect to TNR) would discuss that at length. And yes, Judaism, like every other religious tradition, offers ugliness along with the sublime. Whether the former undoes the latter, as Ethan J. Leib suggests, is a different question. The answer lies above all in how those of us committed to the tradition live our lives, in loving contention with our texts and in authentic encounters with others and God. And there is nothing disingenuous about that.

Still a choice

TO THE EDITORS:

If Ryan Lizza is correct, the teachers' union chiefs shouldn't be beaming so much at Al Gore's professions of fidelity to their agendas ("Same Lesson," August 21). The "dirty little secret" is that many Democrats are fed up with "the unions' resistance to standards with teeth." And proponents of school vouchers shouldn't be so chipper, either. No matter what George W. Bush advocates in his campaign, many Republicans have "already given up on vouchers, which don't attract much public support." According to Lizza, both parties are moving toward a centrist consensus that Joe Lieberman was way ahead of everyone else in constructing.

There are, however, a few flies in this romantic confection. If Gore wins, he undoubtedly will have his eye on a second term, and the teachers' unions have practically colonized the Democratic Party. It's hard to see how he could betray them and retain their support. As for the supposedly waning support for vouchers, Lizza must be relying on education-establishment polls like Phi Delta Kappa's recent one, which posed a false choice: Do you favor improving existing public schools or offering students vouchers to attend private or parochial schools? That's bogus because the point of vouchers is precisely to prod the public schools into improving. And that's happening in places like Florida, Milwaukee, and Cleveland, where parental support for vouchers is sky-high.

Actually, no matter how much Gore and Bush battle for Lieberman's middle ground, there won't be a national consensus that will settle the most important education issues, such as parental choice and teacher tenure. Schooling is a state and local responsibility, and neither candidate is proposing a constitutional amendment to nationalize education.

ROBERT HOLLAND
Senior Fellow
Lexington Institute
Arlington, Virginia

True confessions

TO THE EDITORS:

It is flattering to have my book, *Troubling Confessions*, reviewed by so eminent a jurist as Richard A. Posner, and I am pleased by the nice things he has to say about it ("Let Them Talk," August 21). But his conclusion that my concern about the role of confessions in criminal procedure "is somewhat overwrought" derives from his dismissive view of what he calls the "highfalutin language of free will that ornaments the [Supreme] Court's opinions." Posner refuses to take seriously the Court's language of "voluntariness," its insistence that a confession by a criminal suspect be the product of a "free and rational will"—not only in his book review but in some of his opinions for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. In *United States* v. *Rutledge* (1990), for instance, he writes that "the faculty of will approach ... leads nowhere." He goes on

continued on page 49

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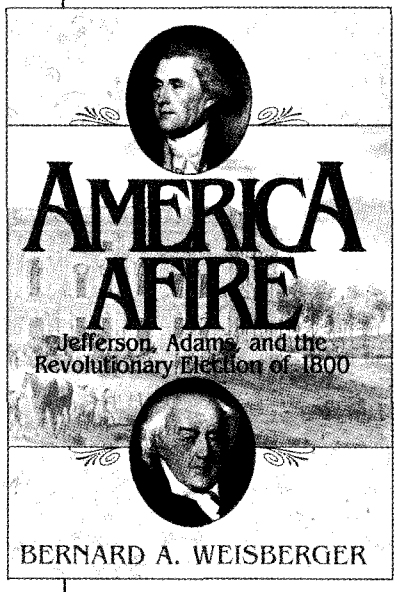

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Real World

POLITICS UNDER OUR current campaign finance laws can be a treacherous endeavor, so we should be a little forgiving of the Gore campaign's recent interactions with the entertainment industry. On the one hand, Hollywood executives are purveyors of what Joe Lieberman has called a "culture of carnage," brazenly deceiving the general public and corrupting the innocent minds of children for profit. On the other hand, they just gave the Democratic National Committee about $10 million of that filthy lucre. On the one hand, Miramax's Harvey Weinstein once circumvented the ratings system to market his movie *Kids*, which features 13-year-olds shooting drugs, getting infected with HIV, and having random, wretched sex. On the other hand, Weinstein helped put together a massive Radio City Music Hall fund-raiser for the vice president a week ago. This is politics, after all. In a sign of their increasing confidence, Al Gore and Lieberman even described their attendance at these events as a profile in courage. Not every politician, we were informed, is prepared to look wealthy Malibu donors in the eye, tell them they're poisoning children's minds, and then ask for a check. Not that Gore and Lieberman pushed their luck. In Beverly Hills, the ever-pliant Lieberman, fast becoming the ideological Gumby of American politics, reassured the moguls, "We will nudge you. But we will never become censors."

Nudge, nudge, wink, wink—say no more. The Hollywood execs know what the rest of the country's elites know: that the pseudo-populism of the last couple of months is electoral hooey, and not much else. Because Gore has veered so far to the left on economic issues, he needs a dash of conservative populism to protect his right flank. Hence the sudden revival of Tipper Gore's erstwhile campaign against dirty rock lyrics. It's another shrewd move by the Gore camp, leaving the usual cultural scolds, like Bill Bennett and Lynne Cheney, spluttering aimlessly about Eminem.

But it's still hooey. The premise behind the argument once made by Cheney and Robert Bork, and now by Lieberman and Gore, is that the marketing of violence and sex to children leads to higher levels of teenage violence, sex, drug use, illegitimacy, social breakdown, and so on. But even a cursory glance at reality shows that the opposite is true. The era that has seen the popular culture ratchet up its drug-addled, bigoted, violent messages to new levels of depravity has also seen one of the sharpest declines in teen violence, sex, and drug use ever. If corporate America is out to poison our children's minds, it's failing in spectacular fashion.

Take the alleged curse of graphically violent video games, often marketed to the underage as innocent toys. This was once one of Bennett's hobbyhorses. In the wake of the Columbine shootings, he went on "Larry King Live" to bemoan "the video games, the movies, other things. I don't think there's anybody [outside the entertainment industry] ... who doesn't understand the coarsening effect of a lot of this cultural crud on our kids." Bennett was referring to games like Mortal Kombat, which debuted in 1992; Doom, which debuted in 1993; and Quake, which came out in 1996. But Bennett has his data the wrong way around. Teen assault rates actually peaked in Mortal Kombat's first year and have been falling ever since, a coincidence recently pointed out by the author Mike Males. In roughly the same period, teen murder rates have fallen almost 50 percent—one of the steepest declines ever. Juvenile violent-arrest rates have also headed south since Doom began darkening America's computer screens, and they are still falling. But didn't Columbine highlight the crisis of violence in our schools? Actually, no. From 1993 to today, the number of children carrying guns to school has been halved, according to a recent survey of almost 140,000 schoolkids. Jack Valenti of the Motion Picture Association was ridiculed for mentioning some of these statistics in his congressional testimony, but his numbers went unchallenged. One of them is particularly striking: The percentage of the under-18 population arrested in 1997 for violent crimes hit a five-year low of 0.41 percent. This is Lieberman's "culture of carnage."

Well, maybe the kids have stopped killing each other and begun acting like bunny rabbits instead. In her Hill testimony last week, Cheney asked the following ominous question: "What is the entertainment industry doing to our children when they create a culture in which children are viewed this way, when they make it seem as though early adolescents are sexual objects, that early adolescents should be expected to take drugs and have sex...?" The answer to her question is readily available to anyone with a Web browser and an open mind. In the wake of gangsta rap, Internet porn, and movies like *Kids* and *American Pie*, the teenage birthrate has hit a 60-year low, falling 20 percent since 1991. Teen abortions have dropped one-third since the mid-'80s, falling for each of the last seven years. Drugs? Compared to the 1970s, we live in a strikingly sober time. Some studies show an increase in pot-smoking among teens this decade (could this be a hidden contributor to the simultaneous decline in teen violence?), but most anti-social substances have shown stable or falling rates of teenage use in the last few years.

There are three ways to interpret these numbers. *Kulturkämpfers* like Bennett and Lieberman might argue that crime rates would have dropped even faster if Hollywood had cleaned up its act. If every 13-year-old boy had been encouraged to watch *Shakespeare in Love* rather than play Doom on his Playstation, they imply, we'd live in a crime-free paradise. Yeah, right. Force teenage boys to sit through *Shakespeare in Love* and crime rates are liable to go through the roof. Besides, it's hard to beat a 50 percent decrease in teen crime since the mid-'90s; and no society, except a totalitarian one, is going to eradicate all mischief and violence among 17-year-old boys. That's what they do. A more plausible interpretation is that popular culture and teen behavior are only loosely connected. Today's kids may actually be less impressionable than previous generations, because they're so overexposed so young. They see entertainment as fantasy and don't relate it to their lives in any simple way.

The third interpretation is the most subversive. It is that the rise of a bawdy, violent popular culture is actually linked to the decline in crime and dysfunction among the young. The key to controlling teenagers, after all, is not repression but distraction. A 14-year-old consumed with murdering mythic gods on his Playstation is not on a street corner making trouble; he's taking out his aggression on a monitor. Likewise, the comedic parody of violence in professional wrestling may be not an incitement to assault outside the ring but a giant sublimation of the violent urges most young males have a hard time controlling. I can't prove this hunch, but it certainly merits further study. And it makes more sense than the hysteria peddled by the Democratic running mate and the Republican running mate's wife. The question that needs to be answered right now is not what our popular culture has been doing wrong for the last decade or so—but what, in this strange and blessed time, it has actually been doing right.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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Games Over

OLYMPIC OPENING CEREmonies are, by their nature, kitschy. And last week's four-and-a-half-hour extravaganza in Sydney—complete with a "lawn-mower ballet" and children costumed as flowers—

proved no exception. But this particular halftime show, according to Olympics boosters, held deeper significance. That's because, for the first time since North Korea and South Korea went to war in 1950, the two countries' Olympic delegations marched together under the single banner of Korea. The gesture symbolized, in the words of International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan Antonio Samaranch, "friendship, peace, and solidarity." Or, as the *Los Angeles Times* put it in a front-page article, "The joint march ... vividly made real the symbolic power of sports to bring people together. It was an evening rich with possibilities—the very reason the Olympic movement relentlessly persists in promoting sports as a path to world peace."

Hogwash. The joint march (in which some North Korean athletes wore pins bearing the visage of Kim Il Sung) didn't promote world peace; it promoted the moral equality of states—the notion that there is no important distinction between a liberal democracy like South Korea and the primitive despotism to its north. North Korea shouldn't even have an Olympic team. This is, after all, a country where millions have starved to death in the past few years. Surely North Korea has better things to spend its money on than training the 31 athletes it sent to Sydney (accompanied by 30 government officials, some presumably sent to prevent defections). For the Olympics to help the Stalinists in Pyongyang—whose only deserved international exposure would be in front of a human rights tribunal—place propaganda above food is bad enough. For egocentric gasbags like Samaranch to call it a step forward for humanity verges on obscene.

But this is what the Olympics have become. The games don't simply efface the moral distinctions between democracies and dictatorships; they actually favor the latter. Ever wonder why India, which is nearly as big as China and at least as sports-obsessed, has won fewer than one-tenth as many medals? It's because China, as a dictatorship, can do what it takes to win—spend vast sums on government-run sports facilities in every major city; take complete control of young athletes' lives; and, if necessary, pump them full of performance-enhancing steroids to give them an edge. That's what the regimes in East Germany, Romania, and the Soviet Union did during the cold war, and the Chinese well understand the benefit their athletic triumphs brought—in propaganda abroad and ultranationalist distraction from misery at home.

And, if the Olympics showcase the worst of communism, they manage to showcase the worst of capitalism as well. As previously noted in these pages ("Unspecial Olympics," by Jason Zengerle, February 15, 1999), the Olympics, originally intended to celebrate the amateur ideal, have become occasions for gross profiteering. Representatives of cities vying to host the games routinely offer what are essentially bribes to IOC officials. To get the Summer Games in Sydney, organizers lavished IOC members with free accommodations at five-star hotels and resorts and "sporting scholarships" for their home countries. At the IOC's museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, there's even an exhibit—dubbed the "Juan Antonio Samaranch Collection"—of all the gifts bestowed upon the IOC president by suitors over the last 20 years. And, if that weren't bad enough, the Olympics don't even really benefit their host cities economically. While enriching a few, they usually leave cities mired in debt—debt for which ordinary citizens generally pick up the tab.

There is nothing wrong, of course, with athletes from different countries competing. That already happens at myriad world championships held across the globe. But such competitions are usually modest affairs—free of the pomposity and graft that accompany the Olympic "movement." And the competitions can be strictly screened for drugs—something the people who run the Olympics have generally refused to do. That alone might give democracies a fair shot, and even when dictatorships did compete they would not enjoy the vast propaganda stage that the Olympics afford them today.

In a sense, it's too bad that the Olympics are being held in Sydney and not Beijing, the early favorite. Were they being held in China, the moral farce that the Olympics today represent would be plain to see. Promoted to foster "friendship, peace, and solidarity," the games now subvert the ideals of freedom and human rights on which any meaningful international solidarity must be based. Designed as a tribute to human excellence, the Olympics are now a testament to human greed. On October 1, the Olympic flame will be extinguished in Sydney. Let's never light it again. ■

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NOTEBOOK

DON'T WAIT FOR THE SREBRENICA OF WEST AFRICA: In late July, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke dubbed Liberian President Charles Taylor the Slobodan Milosevic of Africa. Good analogy. Milosevic had a pattern: He brutally attacked one obscure country until his atrocities put it on the front page, and then he turned to another. And so you may have noticed, in tiny wire stories buried inside your newspaper, that awful things have been happening in the small, impoverished West African country of Guinea. The man responsible? Taylor. In recent weeks, armed men from Liberia and their allies from the Sierra Leonean Revolutionary United Front (RUF) have launched a series of attacks against border towns in neighboring Guinea, displacing thousands and killing a U.N. aid worker. Taylor is also reportedly harboring Ahmed Toure, the son of Guinea's first president and a man who wants the job himself. In all likelihood, the two are gearing up for an all-out invasion similar to the one the RUF launched from Liberia into Sierra Leone nine years ago. What's Taylor after? The same old thing: a regional empire to terrorize and plunder. Oh, and something else—he wants to please Muammar Qaddafi. In recent years, Qaddafi has quietly built up quite a following among West African leaders, including Taylor, Burkina Faso's Blaise Compaore, Ivory Coast's recently installed military leader General Robert Gueï, and the jailed leader of the RUF, Foday Sankoh. Guinea's Lansana Conte, however, has not fallen in line. Earlier this year, the Clinton administration threatened Taylor with sanctions, but it hasn't followed through. May we remind the administration of a lesson it learned the hard way in its dealings with the Milosevic of southeastern Europe? Threats don't work; reprisals do.

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM A NATION OF CONVICTS?: These days, everyone seems to have Australia on the brain. Much of the $20 million the National Rifle Association is spending to help elect George W. Bush and other true believers goes for a half-hour infomercial now airing in about a dozen swing states, including Michigan and Pennsylvania. The infomercial examines gun-control laws in various countries—particularly Australia. That's where, after a 1996 gun massacre in Tasmania left 35 dead, the government consolidated gun laws, mandated registration, and bought back 640,000 semiautomatic weapons. This, the ad claims, led to a sudden and dramatic rise in crime: "Armed robberies have skyrocketed, up 69 percent; assaults involving guns rose 28 percent, [and] gun murders increased 19 percent." Powerful statistics. But they're bogus. It's true that armed robberies in Australia have increased in recent years, but, according to Australian law enforcement officials, that increase began before the gun-control laws were implemented—and was largely because of a heroin epidemic. What's more, the Australian Institute of Criminology (the Aussies' equivalent of the FBI) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics report that in 1998—the first full year during which all the new gun-control laws were in effect and the buyback program was complete—the percentage of armed robberies *involving guns* actually dropped 8 percent; the number of murders *involving guns* dropped 45 percent (albeit from 99 in 1996 to 54). The Aussies, naturally, aren't taking this sitting down. The government has written NRA President Charlton Heston asking him to take the ad off the airwaves. The attorney general of the state of South Australia has actually filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission. Now if the Australians could just do something about NBC's Olympic coverage....

THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE GOP: Last week an interviewer from Fox News asked George W. Bush if, should he be elected, he'd consider reducing the size of his tax cut in the event of an economic downturn. Bush first denied that a recession would occur. ("I got a plan to keep the economy from turning south," he assured, unreassuringly.) But then he seized on the possibility as a rationale for an even larger tax cut. "See, I come from the school of thought that during a recession, it's important to give people more money back faster," Bush explained, "Now, that may cause us to run a short-term deficit, but the fundamental question is: How do you cause the economy to grow?" Bush is on to something. According to a prestigious economic theory, one of the best responses to a slowdown is to stimulate consumer demand by cutting taxes or boosting government spending—even if it creates a deficit (or, as Bush put it, "a tax cut is really one of the anecdotes to coming out of an economic illness"). The prestigious economic theory that holds this, however, is Keynesianism, which conservatives have derided for 20 years. And Keynesian economics also holds that, just as the government should stimulate demand during a recession, it should restrain it during a boom. Right now, in other words, a big tax cut is a very bad idea. Lucky for Bush and the Republicans that they think Keynesianism is a bad theory.

RAISING HIS PROFILE: Addressing Howard University students last week, Al Gore dropped his generic stump opening in favor of something more specific. In early September, Howard University student Prince C. Jones was shot and killed in Northern Virginia by an undercover police officer from Prince George's County, Maryland. The officer followed Jones's Jeep in an unmarked car for 16 miles, across state lines, and, after Jones rammed his vehicle into the officer's, fired at him 16 times, hitting him six. So Gore began his remarks by asking for a moment of silence to remember Jones and "all of the issues that are converging in the grief that we feel." An honorable request. But then Gore went on to say, "Although it's an ongoing legal matter and it's not proper to talk about the details, let me just say that the whole practice of racial profiling must come to an end." The implication was clear: Jones was trailed because he was black. But there's no evidence of that. The officer in question, who is black himself, claims he followed Jones because he believed his Jeep had been involved in the theft of a police weapon. That doesn't mean the officer acted appropriately, and it doesn't mean Gore was wrong to remember Jones in his speech. But it does mean Gore shouldn't have linked a traumatic death to an

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explosive issue when there's no reason to think they are connected, just because he wanted to appeal to the crowd.

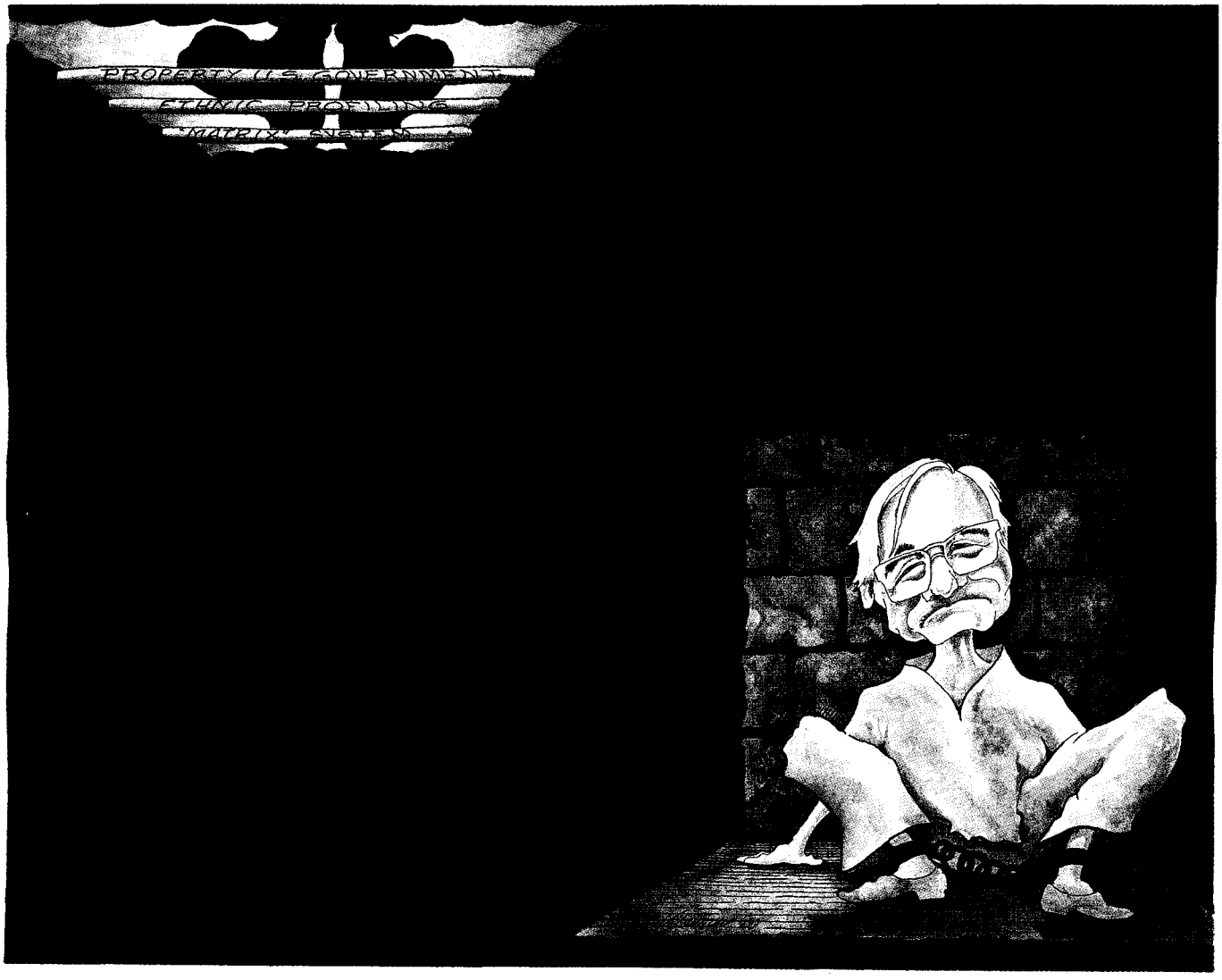
IMAGINE IF HE'D COACHED HIGH SCHOOL: Though many stereotypes about Texas may be obsolete (see "Lone Star Joining," by Benjamin Soskis, September 18), the fanatical Lone Star obsession with football apparently lives on. Take the strange case of former pro football kicker Russell Erxleben, sentenced this week to seven years in federal prison for bilking some $50 million from hundreds of investors in his currency-trading firm. It seems that, when he wasn't ripping off peoples' life savings, Erxleben coached a Pee Wee football team near Austin. In most places, the team's parents might be expected to cheer this criminal's banishment from their children's midst. Not in Texas. Fourteen of the Pee Wee parents petitioned the judge to delay Erxleben's sentencing until after the end of football season.

COMING SOON TO DUBUQUE: "While in past campaigns, vice presidential candidates have been relegated to shoring up the base, or to second-tier states and media markets, Secretary Cheney will be campaigning in key battleground states."—Bush-Cheney campaign spokesman Ray Sullivan, *The Washington Times*, September 5

"CHENEY WOOS VOTERS IN IDAHO FALLS STOPOVER"
—*Idaho Statesman* headline, September 19

HOME NEWS: With this issue, THE NEW REPUBLIC welcomes the arrival of our new president, Andrew McColough, most recently vice president for circulation and administration at TV Guide Magazine Group, Inc. We are also pleased to announce a spate of editorial reinforcements: Senior Editor Lawrence F. Kaplan, formerly executive editor of *The National Interest*; Contributing Editor Yossi Klein Halevi, who will report from Israel; Associate Editor Michael Crowley, who returns to TNR after tours at the *Boston Phoenix* and *The Boston Globe*; Assistant Editor Laura Maggi from *The American Prospect*; and Assistant Literary Editor Laura Beers. ■

VINT'S WEEK



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Campaign Journal

All in the Family

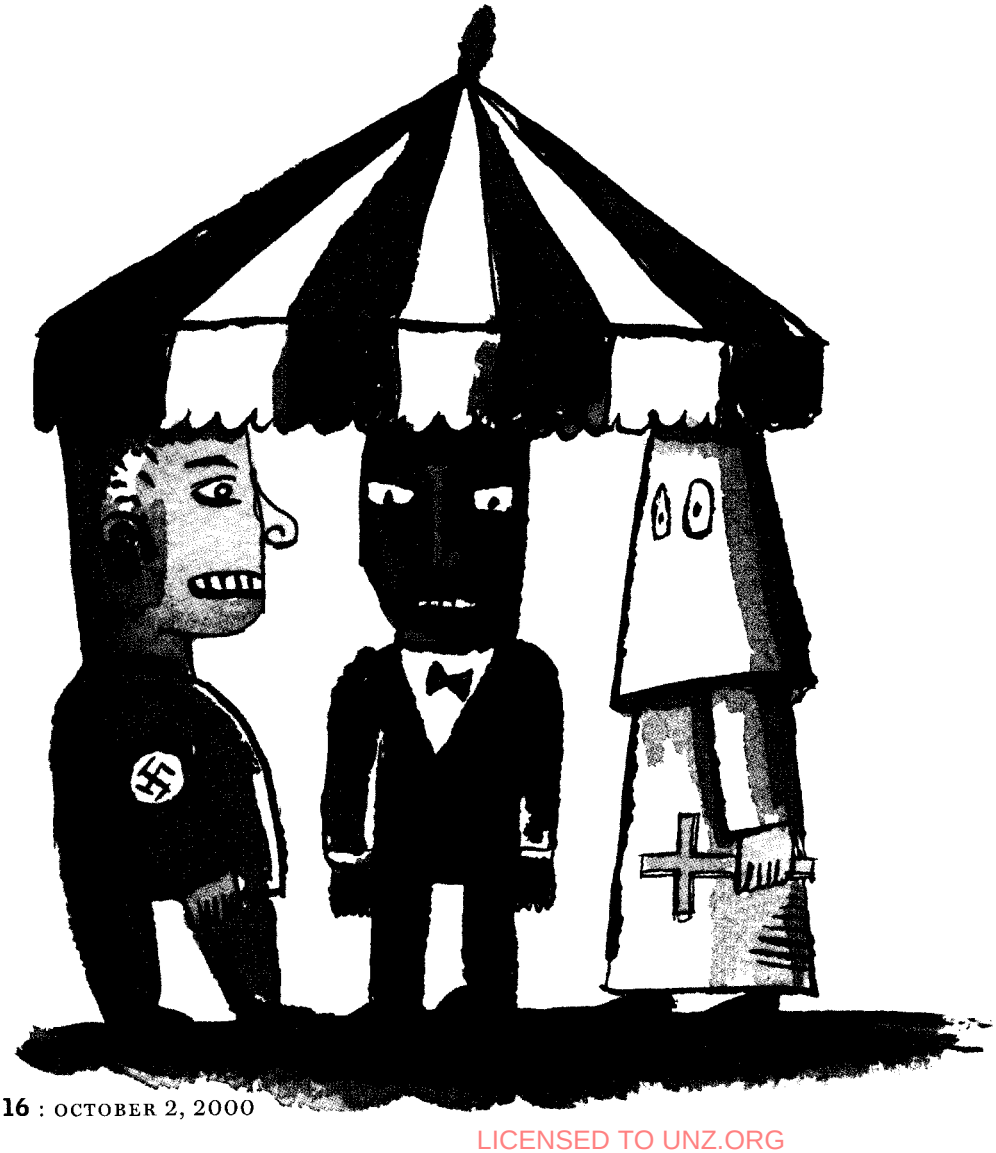
By Michelle Cottle

GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

It is obvious to the folks at Bob Jones University that I do not belong. For starters, I am the only woman on campus wearing pants: The university dress code requires female students and faculty to clothe themselves in more appropriate attire—dresses or skirts, mostly of the floor-length variety. What's more, I have a small press pass dangling around my neck. Just by looking at me, therefore, locals can instantly tell that I hail not only from the liberalmediaelite but from the secular-avant-garde-that-scorns-the-traditional-moral-values-that-decent-Americans-hold-sacred. Thank God I left my nose ring at home.

I'm here to watch a longtime, card-carrying member of the antiliberalmediaelite, Pat Buchanan, try to kick-start his general election campaign. Initially, Buchanan's selection of BJU as his launchpad looked like your run-of-the-mill political stunt. After being sidelined for weeks while doctors tended to his gallbladder and the Federal Election Commission ruled on whether he could claim the Reform Party's millions in matching funds, Buchanan is desperate to remind voters that he is still running for president. And what more effective—and grossly opportunistic—way to drum up media buzz than for a practicing Catholic with a black running mate to hawk his wares at an institution best-known for its freshly repealed ban on interracial dating and its belief that Catholics are damned?

But this evening, tucked into a seat in the university's Rodeheaver Auditorium, I begin to see the larger philosophical appeal of the venue. Though Buchanan's speech is a little less fiery than usual—losing a gallbladder and, with it, 15 pounds can take the stuffing out of even the sassiest candidate—the audience kindles to his trademark us-versus-them rhetoric. (The students at Bob Jones are not the whooping and barking type—they are, in fact, eerily polite. But some older folks who have dropped by get a bit rowdy.) The crowd's warm response shouldn't come as a surprise. Yes, the folks at BJU have been known to make unflattering remarks about the candidate's chosen faith—for example, calling Catholicism a "satanic system" and the pope "an Antichrist." But, really, this is just a sectarian quibble. The important point is that the Bob Jones crowd at least believes that *some* easily defined chunk of folks is damned for all eternity. Because, in the end, it doesn't matter to Pitchfork Pat whom you hate, fear, or disdain, as long as your hate, fear, or disdain is deeply felt—and can be marshaled to fight the forces that disapprove of (and will ultimately attempt to curtail!) your particular prejudices.



In this way, the Bob Jones kickoff crystallizes the emerging essence of the Buchanan campaign. Call it "Big-Tent Bigotry"—or maybe "Prejudice With a Purpose" (the overarching purpose, of course, being to keep Pat's political career afloat). To some extent, it's a strategy forced upon Buchanan by circumstances. First, he had to abandon a GOP hell-bent on nominating a "compassionate conservative" (in Patspeak, a spineless moral relativist). Then his third-party run was complicated by the fact that, for the first time, voters seeking an anti-globalization candidate have more than one option—and most voters not specifically looking for a guy

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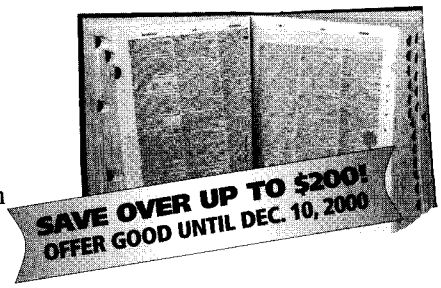

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who's into race-baiting, conspiracy theories, and the early works of General Franco are backing Ralph Nader. This has left Buchanan scrambling to cobble together a coalition among the one demographic group with which he holds an undisputed edge: bigots. But while in past years Buchanan has been content with angry white men convinced that their way of life was being destroyed by the Chinese, Mexicans, Jews, or feminists, this time around he has had to branch out. After all, the country is becoming more diverse. So, this year, black, white, protestant, Catholic—if you have a grudge against some subset of people, Pat Buchanan is your man.

To wit, in his efforts to secure the Reform nomination last fall, Buchanan allied himself with Lenora Fulani, a Marxist (Patspeak: godless) black radical with virtually nothing in common with Pat save a penchant for making anti-Semitic remarks. So what if she was a Commie? At least she was angry. But, when family feuding ruptured the Buchanan-Fulani alliance (and with it the Reform Party), Pat had to try again. In looking around for a running mate, he found another bigot who could help make his campaign look like America: Ezola Foster, an African American former schoolteacher with a loathing of all things liberal but a particularly distinguished history of hard-core, pull-no-punches immigrant-bashing. (Pat waved the Foster choice around like a certificate of non-bigotry—See? Toldya I'm not a racist!—which seemed odd considering Foster clearly is a bigot.) Now, just weeks before Election Day, Buchanan has very publicly reached out to the everyone-but-us-is-serving-Satan crowd at Bob Jones. At this rate, sometime in mid-October we can expect him to be bonding with Louis Farrakhan over the treachery of the white devils created by the scientist Yakub.

To some degree, Buchanan's strategy is the evil twin of Joe Lieberman's. Although an Orthodox Jew, Al Gore's running mate has hit it off with believers of all stripes by assuring them that a shared faith in basic moral principles can help us work through specific differences and bring us closer together. Buchanan, on the other hand, isn't looking so much to bring everyone together as to establish a range of bogeyman "others"—Marxists, globalists, gays, Jews, secularists, and assorted "elites"—decisively and permanently apart.

THUS, BOB JONES UNIVERSITY. Introducing Buchanan, university President Bob Jones III gushes, "Both he and BJU are mavericks and make no apology for that—no apology for being out of the mainstream. Besides, considering where that stream is headed, the direction society is going, I think he and I—indeed this institution—would be both quite embarrassed to find ourselves in the mainstream." Again, after Buchanan's speech, Jones cheers the candidate's commitment to straight talk while getting in a not-so-subtle dig at George W. Bush: "The only chance of anyone winning this election from the Democrats will be to go to someone who is willing to step out of the pack and decide he's not going to look like Mr. Gore and talk like Mr. Gore and say the acceptable pabulum sort of things that are carefully tailored to offend no one." Although avoiding a formal endorsement, Jones notes that Buchanan is clearly "such a man." Let's hear it for the papist!

Naturally, such praise makes Pat beam with pride. These people truly understand him. After all, his entire campaign is built on the human tendency to be offended by "the other side." And he certainly doesn't intend to stop inflaming those prejudices at this stage of the game. If anything, we can look forward to an escalation in rhetoric as Buchanan makes a final push for the votes he'll need to win another round of matching funds and continue building his Reform Party. For, make no mistake, it is his party from here on out (at least what's left of it). "We need a new fighting conservative traditionalist party," he tells the congregation at Bob Jones in closing. "I believe and I hope that one day we can take America back. That is why we're building this Gideon's Army: We're headed for Armageddon to do battle for the Lord." And we're doing it together. ■

London Dispatch

Over a Barrel

By ROMESH RATNESAR

AS BAD AS last week was for Tony Blair—and it was his roughest since becoming prime minister three years ago—it could have been worse. Last Monday, Blair made a swing through the English heartland to hold town meetings with the middle English voters he's courting for the next general election. It wasn't a good trip. On a visit to a community computer center, Blair was bum-rushed by locals furious about the price of gas. "What about the bloody petrol?" one woman demanded; another called Blair's deputy, John Prescott, a "fat bastard." Just as the prime minister was about to leave a raucous meeting in the city of Hull for dinner at a local Chinese restaurant, police warned him that every street leading to the restaurant would be blocked by protesters—and that, even if he made it in, he might not be able to get out. And so Blair sneaked out of town, thus sparing Britain the spectacle of its leader, at the height of the nation's most serious crisis in 20 years, imprisoned with a bowl of wonton soup.

Things didn't improve when Blair returned to Downing Street. The government's initial response to the protests by farmers and truckers and taxi drivers against high gas prices was both late and indifferent. Blair's first-night prediction that the fuel trucks would be moving the next day not only infuriated the picketers but proved wrong. His pleas to the oil companies to order their truckers back to work fell on deaf ears. Even at his "victory" news conference announcing the blockade's end last Thursday, Blair managed to sound both defiant and, as the English like to say, "whingey": He blustered that there was "no way" he would yield to protesters' demands to cut fuel taxes, but he also complained about one oil company's decision to hike prices further. And victory has

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proved more than a little Pyrrhic. Lines of cars still snarl the streets around nearly every London gas station, most of which still run out of fuel by mid-afternoon. In a remarkable turnaround, two public-opinion polls last weekend showed that, for the first time in eight years, the Tories are pulling ahead of Blair's new Labour Party.

The prime minister clearly didn't see this coming. After all, the protests represented the kind of unenlightened, interest-group politics Blair has so successfully battled within his own party. And even the many Britons who chafe at the cost of gas were not sorry to see the blockade end. In taking a hard line, Blair believed he was following the model set by Margaret Thatcher—whom he openly admires—which dictates that the way to deal with rabble-rousing protesters is forever to stand firm.

But Thatcher's strategy failed Blair last week—thus illuminating one of the great weaknesses of his vaunted Third Way philosophy. When Thatcher was smashing unions, no one doubted that she was acting on principle: Her contempt for labor was visceral. This didn't always make her Britain's most popular leader. But it provided her with a fanatically loyal base upon which she could rely in times of political need. By contrast, the current prime minister, dubbed "Tony Blur" for his efforts to appeal simultaneously to all sides on every issue, has few such diehards to summon. And that has left him perilously weak as he tries, for once, to steer public opinion rather than follow it. Blair's failure to rouse the public to his side last week was not just a public relations gaffe, as his government seems to think. It revealed how soft and thin his popularity has been all along, even within the Labour Party. And it shows just how tight Britain's next general election, likely to take place next year, may be.

For all the Blair government's missteps—from its failure to reform the National Health Service to the financial collapse of the project to build a Millennium Dome on the Thames—it seemed, until very recently, sure to win reelection. Just last month, Labour enjoyed a 20-point lead in the polls. No longer. In responding to the fuel crisis, Tory leader William Hague has sounded as cynical and opportunistic as ever: First he denounced the paralysis caused by the picketers, then he praised them as "fine, upstanding citizens." But while voters used to regard Hague's pandering as unseemly, they seem not to mind it now that he's pandering to them. More than two-thirds of the public supported last week's protests against fuel taxes, and Hague has pledged that, as prime minister, he would cut them.

By contrast, the government's chief budget official, Chancellor Gordon Brown, insists the Blair administration will not go wobbly and refuses to commit to a fuel-tax reduction (though other aides are pushing hard for one). Blair seems to think that by standing up to the rural, self-employed farmers and truckers—one cartoonist dubbed them "fat blokes united in disgruntlement"—who held the country hostage, he could muster the same law-and-order "silent majority" that Thatcher rallied when she famously stared down the national coal miners' union in 1984. He has also tried to defend Britain's fuel-tax burden—the highest in Europe, 20 percent higher than France's—by appealing to his constituents' progressive instincts. Fuel taxes, the government claims, fall more heavily on the rich than on the poor, help fund public schools, and benefit the environment.

All perfectly sound arguments. The problem is that the British left, embittered by Blair's years of triangulation, isn't responding. In three years of focus-grouped, poll-driven, sound-bite governance, New Labour has failed to convince

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voters it possesses *any* guiding political philosophy, let alone a liberal one. The government has slashed public spending (as a percentage of GDP) to its lowest level in three decades and adopted draconian conservative positions on social issues such as immigration and drugs. As a result, Labour's traditional base has offered only tepid support for its embattled leader. The trade unions, for example, while supporting Blair during the fuel crisis, said this week they would abandon him if the government tried to pass a law forcing oil-tanker drivers to deliver fuel in times of crisis. Support for the left-wing Liberal Democrat Party has risen 5 percent in the last month—mostly because of Labour defections. It's the kind of desertion problem Thatcher rarely had to contemplate.

And the middle-class moderates who joined New Labour in the last election aren't rallying to Blair's defense either. Despite the government's effort to tar the picketers as "forces of conservatism," the people who feel the crunch from fuel duties are the suburban, middle-income motorists that the Labour Party under Blair has tried so assiduously to court. The danger for Blair if he refuses to lower fuel taxes in his next budget is not only that the truckers will rush back to the barricades. It's that the ordinary people who are inconvenienced by such activists—and have no firm ideological commitment to Blair or Labour—will turn their wrath not on the strikers but on the government. In one poll this week, 60 percent of voters disapproved of Blair's refusal to make concessions to the protesters.

Not that caving would solve Blair's problem—it would merely confirm his image as a man defined not by core beliefs but by the whims of public opinion. Holding fast is good policy, and it would be good politics, too—were it coming from a politician with a reputation for deep convictions. But Tony Blair didn't use his three years of prosperity and calm to build such a reputation. And the worst crisis in two decades is a difficult time to start. ■

Mogadishu Dispatch

Rally

By Peter Maass

The tennis courts at Casa d'Italia, a country club in Mogadishu, have nourished several generations of players. First, there were the Italians who built the club and who controlled Somalia in the days of Mussolini; apparently, you had to develop a good backhand to be a good fascist. After Somalia gained independence in 1960 and took an ill-advised turn toward Marxism, Russian advisers arrived to offer pointers in building a socialist state, and they, too, found time to work on their ground strokes. Back then, Somalis rarely appeared on the courts except as ball boys. But today the regulars at Casa d'Italia are Somalis. After all, only a handful of foreigners remain in lawless Mogadishu, mostly Libyan and Egyptian diplomats, and they behave like hostages, rarely venturing outdoors.

At first glance, the tennis scene in Mogadishu appears another casualty of the decade-long civil war. Casa d'Italia's two courts represent 66 percent of the functional playing surface left in town, and their condition is not what it could be. The unpainted cement courts are marred by cracks that spider from the walls to the nets, and players must take care to avoid the gouges left by direct mortar hits. The streets of Newark, New Jersey, are smoother. Casa d'Italia's restaurant, which in its heyday boasted splendid penne and Chianti, served its last meal long ago. It is now a looted hulk of concrete and metal, its once immaculate grounds a refuge for goats. The surrounding neighborhood is an end-of-days panorama of war blight, filled with buildings that resemble construction skeletons picked clean by the ravages of battle and thievery. It evokes comparisons to Grozny or Sarajevo or Dresden, and, if one's mind doesn't make the connection, the occasional round of gunfire jogs the memory.

Even so, a miracle is taking place at Casa d'Italia: Tennis is on the upswing. At almost any time of day, a visitor will hear the sound of balls being swatted back and forth. The swatting is being done by a squad of youths under the tutelage of Mogadishu's Pied Piper of tennis, Abdul Rahman Warsame, the 37-year-old deputy president of the Somali Tennis Federation. Thanks to the several thousand dollars in equipment that the International Tennis Federation sends to Mogadishu every year, Warsame oversees the instruction of about 40 youths, many of whom might otherwise occupy their hands with assault rifles. "I encourage young boys and young girls to learn tennis instead of wasting their time in the streets," he told me. "It contributes to our people and our country."

During the early and worst years of the fighting, play was impossible. When Mohammed Siad Barre, the dictator nicknamed "Big Mouth," was overthrown in 1991, the coalition of clan warlords who defeated him decided that instead of setting up a new government, they would fight among themselves—which they did, quite tenaciously, causing mass starvation. In 1992, an American-led U.N. force hit the beaches. But after 18 U.S. soldiers were killed the following year in a botched raid on a warlord's presumed lair—which led to the famous and humiliating spectacle of a GI's corpse being dragged through the streets—the United States withdrew its contingent. Soon afterward, the remaining U.N. troops packed their bags, too, and the warlords were free to feast upon their suffering nation.

The fighting has tapered off in recent years, largely because of exhaustion, and this has allowed tennis enthusiasts to retake what's left of Casa d'Italia. Soccer remains Somalia's most popular sport by far, but Warsame is making sure tennis is not forgotten as Mogadishu tries to reassemble itself. The tennis federation pays "rent" to the

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local thugs so they won't attack the players. There's still occasional fighting in the neighborhood, which means the kids risk substantially more than pulled muscles when they take to the courts. But they still play—in an atmosphere several universes removed from the elite tennis camps that create the likes of Andre Agassi and Anna Kournikova. The afternoon I visited, a burst of gunfire interrupted my chat with Warsame. None of the kids so much as flinched. "It's our daily life," Warsame explained. "It's normal."

THE STAR OF Somali tennis is 18-year-old Abdisamad Hussein Jumale. He started playing six years ago but occasionally had to flee the courts under fire. When there was too much fighting around Casa d'Italia—which sits alongside the oft-disputed "green line" that separates north and south Mogadishu—Jumale practiced in a gym. When the fighting prevented him from leaving home, as it frequently did, he watched the same tennis video over and over. When I asked how many times he had seen it, he was speechless for a moment, then concluded, "Uncountable." And when asked why he risked venturing onto the courts—his uncle, also a tennis fanatic, was killed while practicing—he shrugged and said, "I loved tennis too much." Jumale does not own a racket; few players can afford one. Some actually practice without shoes. So he plays with a racket borrowed from the Somali Tennis Federation and shares it with anyone who needs it. As we talked courtside, one of his friends lifted it from his hands to hit a few shots. If someone needs his sneakers, he loans them, too. That's the way things work.

When I visited, Jumale was practicing six hours a day, six days a week, training for this year's Olympics. According to Warsame, Jumale had played in only one international tournament, in Nairobi, and lost his first-round match. Even so, the Somali Olympic Committee—the only national organization that has survived the fracturing of the country—was applying on his behalf for a wild-card invitation to Sydney. I couldn't resist the temptation to rally with a potential Olympian, so I asked Jumale if he wouldn't mind hitting a few balls with me, which he was glad to do. It quickly became apparent that Pete Sampras doesn't have much to fear. But, then again, Sampras has never had to hit the ground, racket in hand, because somebody was shooting at him. Surely that should count for something.

Several weeks after my visit to Mogadishu, I learned that the International Tennis Federation had decided against granting Jumale one of its coveted wild cards. I felt sorry for him, but I suspect he won't jump into the warm Indian Ocean and let the sharks devour him. After all, things are going a lot better in Mogadishu. The business sector is growing at a surprising clip—there's even a DHL office in town—and a peace conference in Djibouti agreed in early August on a transitional parliament that will, if all goes according to plan, guide Somalia out of the abyss; the parliament has already chosen a new president. Jumale could see it coming—in the survival, and renaissance, of Somali tennis. "People watch us and are surprised," he told me. "They say it is a sign of the beginning of peace." ■

Bush saves a department to destroy it.

Remedial Ed

By STEPHEN METCALF

REMEMBER WHEN CRANKY, old-school Republicans used to call for abolishing the Department of Education? Well, thanks largely to George W. Bush, those days seem to be over. At this year's convention in Philadelphia, the Republican Platform Committee, in deference to Bush, abandoned the abolition plank that Bob Dole added back in 1996. "When you say abolishment of the Department of Education," explained Tennessee Senator Bill Frist, co-chairman of the committee, "people forget the 'Department of' and it becomes 'abolish education.'"

Bush's efforts have paid off. When journalists call him a moderate, they usually cite his stance on education as evidence. In *The New York Times*, Republicans heralded the plank's removal as "a major victory, emblematic of [Bush's] efforts to create a ... party with more appeal to voters in the center." The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* added that Bush has "a package of education goals that ... [he] can use to woo America's teachers and parents of school-age children." But lost in the swoon over Bush's willingness to maintain the Department of Education has been virtually any discussion of what he'd actually do with it. Which is unfortunate, because you don't have to abolish a government department to transform it beyond recognition. And, judging from the people Bush would likely appoint to run his Education Department, it might look a bit like the Department of the Interior under James Watt.

First, consider the man Bush tapped to head his campaign's team of education advisers: an economist named Erik Hanushek, who some believe would serve as education research czar in a Bush administration. A senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Hanushek is the star proponent of the thesis that "money doesn't matter" for public schools. In Alabama, California, Missouri, New Hampshire, Maryland, New Jersey, Tennessee, and most recently New York, Hanushek has testified for suburbs against cities seeking "fiscal equity" in education funding. As an economist, Hanushek's experience of schools comes primarily in the arcana of regression analyses and data points. This can have its drawbacks: On the heels of testifying that smaller classes and less-decrepit buildings wouldn't help New York City's failing students, for instance, Hanushek was forced to admit that he'd never seen the inside of a New York City public school. (What's more, for his testimony that additional money wouldn't improve New York City's public schools, the state of New York paid Hanushek more than $40,000; the ironies here aren't subtle.)

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While experts, of course, disagree about how and when resources affect student performance, Hanushek's lifelong belief that money doesn't matter places him squarely on the fringe. Says Jeremy Finn, an education professor at SUNY-Buffalo, "Hanushek is an extremist, a real outlier in this debate."

Hanushek is particularly hostile to the Tennessee Project Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) study. Perhaps the most universally praised piece of research in education history—the eminent Harvard statistician Frederick Mosteller has said it is "one of the most important educational investigations ever carried out"—STAR demonstrated that children in smaller classes make strides they sustain throughout their school careers. As such, it has served as the basis for the Clinton administration's decision to make class-size reduction a national priority.

But, in Hanushek's opinion, STAR is shoddy research, tainted in its design and overreaching in its conclusions. "There's a lot of uncertainty about how to interpret the findings," says Hanushek. "The attrition rates were huge, the kids weren't tested going in, and, even so, the effects were small. After relatively small gains in the earliest grades, there's little evidence that there's any effect after that." The bottom line: "These are very expensive policies." The Princeton economist Alan Krueger, whose own meta-analysis of the resources debate recently received the Milken Institute Award for Distinguished Economic Research, disagrees. For its strength of design and the size of its sample, he labels STAR the "Barbary steed" of educational research. As for evidence of STAR's long-term effects, Krueger says the study showed that smaller classes had "narrowed the black-white gap in college test-taking by 54 percent." Nonetheless, Bush would presumably consign class-size reduction to the scrap heap as president.

IN ITS PLACE would likely be a new emphasis on literacy, a longtime pet issue of Barbara Bush and a focal point of W.'s campaign. Bush has decried illiteracy as a "childhood disease," and he takes the metaphor literally. The GOP platform promises to facilitate "state reading initiatives that focus on scientifically based reading research," and Bush has vowed to teach every child to read by third grade by implementing "a reading curriculum that includes elements based on the recent findings of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) research on reading."

Bush is referring to research by the Child Development and Behavior branch of the NICHD (in turn a division of the National Institutes of Health), which, under its current head, G. Reid Lyon, has primarily studied reading failure in young schoolchildren. (It is Lyon who supplied Bush with his "childhood disease" metaphor, once writing that there is "strong evidence for a genetic basis for reading disabilities" and that reading failure can be linked to "aberrant neurophysiological processing.") Touted as a potential Bush education secretary, Lyon in recent years has devoted most of his reading-research budget to what he believes is the "core" component of all reading failure: the "phonological processing deficit." Or, as Lyon explained to the California Assembly's Education Committee in May 1996, reading is "halting and hesitant and nonautomatic, and it's extremely effortful" for poor readers, while good readers "automatically and fluently and accurately read words."

That same year, the NICHD released preliminary results from a study purportedly demonstrating that the phonological processing deficit can be remediated in poor, minority children. Huge numbers of at-risk students, the study implied, need no longer be shunted into special education, which carries a stigma and is enormously expensive. The media leaped at this, and Bush was impressed. Soon after reading the study, he tapped Lyon as an adviser, began promoting NICHD researchers to prominent positions in the Texas education system, and eventually dedicated an "academic and reading skills" center at the University of Texas, largely funded with NICHD grant money. "By launching this new center," Bush declared, "we recognize illiteracy is a health risk. And anything that poses a danger to our children's health should undergo tough scientific scrutiny."

There is, however, one problem with the study that so impressed Bush: As the widely respected literacy researcher Richard Anderson, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Illinois, has noted, it systematically ignored other causes of reading failure, downplaying teacher quality, school quality, and socioeconomic background. Moreover, there's no evidence that, after overcoming a phonological processing deficit, children with reading difficulties actually learn to read—that is, to decode fluently and comprehend what they've read. "Look at the fine print," says Barbara Taylor, a literacy researcher at the University of Minnesota. "The study almost exclusively talks about dramatic gains in 'reading skills,' but never simply reading itself." The "reading skill" most commonly tested in NICHD research is the ability to sound out nonsense words, such as "drox" and "grawl," from flash cards. According to Richard Allington, an education professor at the University of Florida specializing in literacy, "What Lyon's studies have shown, primarily, is that a kid with reading problems can be trained to read gibberish."

STILL, LYON'S WORK serves as the basis for Bush's most ambitious educational proposal to date: a $5 billion literacy omnibus that includes moving Head Start from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Education, refashioning it from what Bush's advisers casually deride as a "health and nutrition program" into a reading initiative stressing phonics.

In moving Head Start to the Department of Education, Bush would likely put it under the control of Douglas Carnine, a University of Oregon professor who serves as the Bush campaign's chief adviser on literacy policy. Although in Texas Bush has generally allied himself with more moderate phonics proponents, Carnine is considered by many who study education to be a phonics fanatic. "Many times I've been sitting in a hearing, called to testify as an expert, and I just sit and chuckle," says Michael Pressley, editor of the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, perhaps the most prestigious journal to publish NICHD research. "And what these religious fanatics, who know nothing about science, have to

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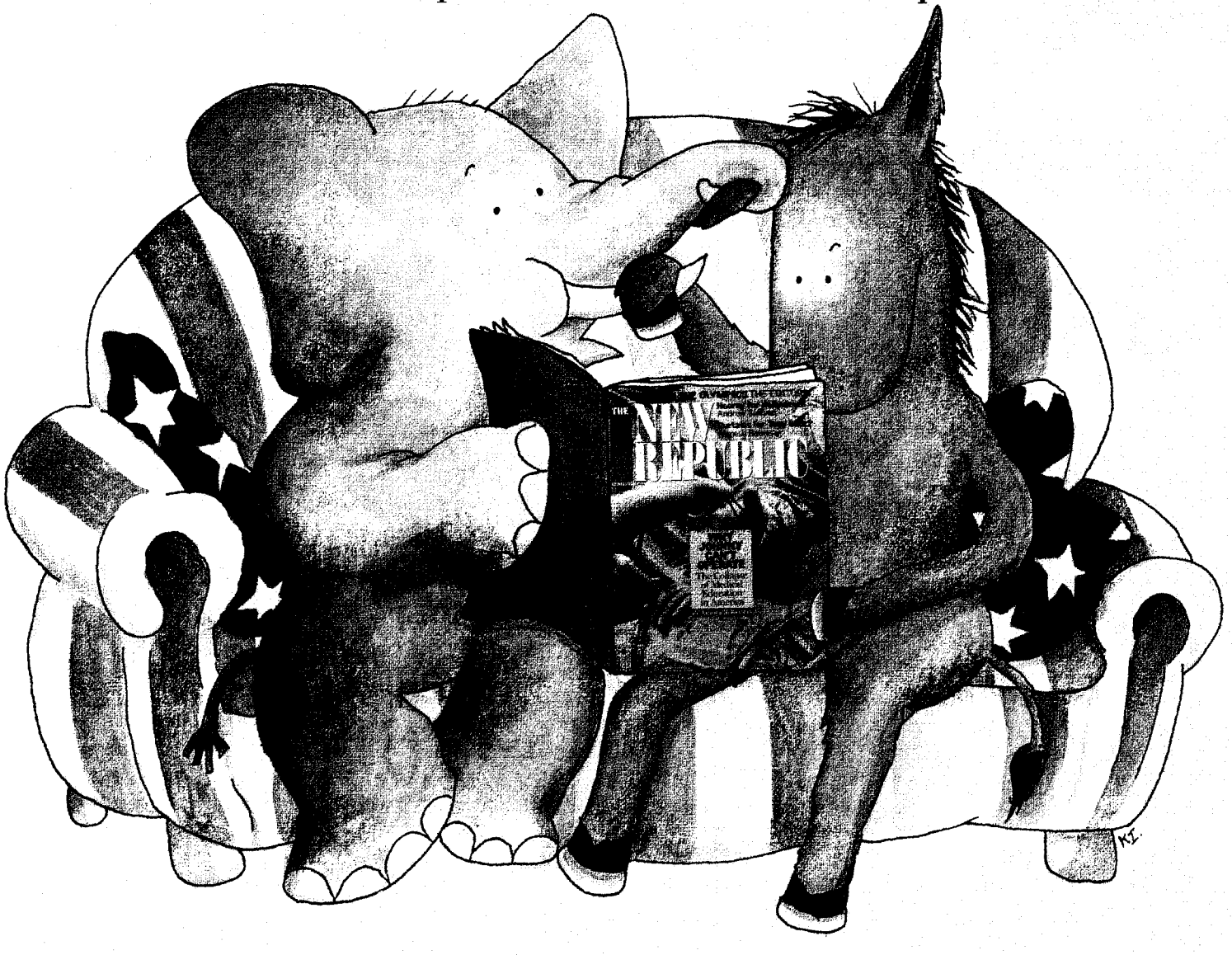

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say isn't any different from Doug Carnine."

For the entirety of his professional life, Carnine has proselytized for a method known as Direct Instruction Systems for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading, or DISTAR. Created in the 1960s by a retired advertising executive, DISTAR was based on "empirical behavior theory" and was designed for "organizing classrooms and prescribing management procedures for regulating the verbal behavior of teachers and students." While phonics, by its nature, imposes a heavily scripted discipline that both teachers and pupils occasionally find restrictive, DISTAR is widely considered to be the most militaristic method. By appointing Carnine to his advisory committee, Bush has thrown a sop to extremists on the issue.

Bush's faith in social science research is admirable, given public education's serial tendency toward fads and superstition. Unfortunately, the research with which he's infatuated doesn't command wide scholarly support as much as it confirms a certain ideological bias. Junking the Tennessee STAR study and class-size reduction in favor of the agendas peddled by Hanushek, Carnine, and Lyon would transform the Department of Education into something barely recognizable. Better, perhaps, if it were abolished. ■

Race for the Senate: Virginia

Unknown Soldier

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

"SIR, DO YOU have a weapon?" the salesman asks me. He is hoping the answer will be yes. The search for heavy metal has been prompted by Virginia Senator Chuck Robb's strange fascination with the metal detector before him—one of the many police gadgets on display at this year's conference of the Virginia Sheriffs' Association. In his red tie and standard-issue dark suit with a handkerchief peeking out of the pocket, Robb already stands out among the well-fed sheriffs in bright golf shirts; his insistence on playing with the metal detector completes the scene. "Let's put this thing to the test!" he'd exclaimed, marching awkwardly through the gateway. When his gold watch failed to trigger the alarm, Robb was visibly disappointed, and the search for a detectable metal object began.

Plenty of the sheriffs are carrying weapons, but rather than borrow a gun Robb grabs a pair of forks from a table. Holding them in the air like a torch, he strides again through the machine, this time triggering the buzzer. But, on the other side, a waitress is slightly alarmed to see the senator carrying the cutlery. "Sir, I'll take those," she says, snatching the forks before Robb can explain and leaving him standing, his empty hand still in the air. A small group of spectators giggle.

They aren't the only ones. Chuck Robb, the only Democratic senator in reelection trouble this year—in fact, he's considered the most vulnerable incumbent in either party—is a figure of derision on both sides of the Potomac and both sides of the aisle. "Robb has been in the Senate for twelve years, and most people can't name a single thing he's done," says Ed Matricardi, executive director of the Virginia Republican Party. One former longtime Democratic Senate aide says, "His Senate career amounts to zero. He's just one of those invisible senators." "Why persist in a political career that would not be missed if it ended?" mused *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen a few years ago. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee calls Robb "our number-one priority," which is not a compliment.

It wasn't always this way. Fifteen years ago, Robb was Al Gore's political twin: a young, up-and-coming Southern Democrat with a first-rate political pedigree who gained prominence by urging his party to abandon its old liberal reflexes. A decorated Vietnam veteran, Robb became an all-American icon when he married Lyndon Johnson's daughter in a regal White House ceremony. Following his election as governor of Virginia in 1981, Robb helped found the Democratic Leadership Council and served as its second chairman. In 1986, when he called on Democrats to "shift the primary focus from racism, the traditional enemy from without, to self-defeating patterns of behavior" among black Americans, *The New York Times* hailed his "hard truths." In 1989, with Gore apparently washed up after his presidential primary loss and Bill Clinton widely mocked for his endless nominating speech at the 1988 convention, *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry wrote that if the party ever fielded a centrist candidate for the White House, "there's an excellent chance that Democrat will be President Robb."

Since those days, however, the Chuck Robb story has gone from fairy tale to tragicomedy. The problems started in the late '80s with a series of scandals—revelations about partying, adultery, and political dirty tricks that sandblasted Robb's personal sheen. But, while other senators have fallen from grace and subsequently rebuilt their political careers—Ted Kennedy exorcised his reputation for philandering, drinking, and even Chappaquiddick by busting rocks on health care and the minimum wage; John McCain, a member of the Keating Five, redeemed himself through campaign finance reform—Robb has never really recovered. His two-term Senate career has been lackluster. He's proved singularly unable to grab winning political issues early and make them his own. He probably would have lost his last race, in 1994, had his opponent not been Oliver North. And this year,

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as he fights to retain his seat on the backbench of the Senate, few even seem to remember that he once appeared destined for so much more.

ROBB'S EARLY ASCENT was nearly flawless. When he married Lynda Bird Johnson in 1967, gallantly decked out in his Marine uniform, the media treated the event as if it were a royal wedding. At the time, Robb was an easy man to root for: a volunteer for the Vietnam War who won a Bronze Star for bravery. To this day he reminds listeners that he watched men "literally die in my arms" and saw a Marine "vaporized" before his eyes.

Robb was elected Virginia's lieutenant governor in 1977 and four years later won the first of two terms as governor. He quickly cultivated an image of honesty and wholesomeness—an image he bolstered with the revelation that he drank a glass of milk every night. His leadership role in the DLC gave him national stature and heft. When the *Post* endorsed him for Senate in 1988, it wrote of his "strong public record ... and his thoughtful contributions to the national political debate. Everything in that regard points to an experienced, knowledgeable man who should serve his state well in and beyond the Capitol." In the Senate, Robb quickly established his authority on foreign affairs, serving as spokesman for the ten Democratic senators who supported the use of force against Iraq in 1990; he even credits himself with persuading Gore to vote with the hawks.

But there were already signs of trouble. During his Senate bid, newspapers reported that Robb, while governor, had been living it up in Virginia Beach with a fast crowd of cocaine users and young lovelies. Soon afterward came articles about a byzantine saga involving a secret tape recording of a Robb rival, former Governor Douglas Wilder, which led to a grand jury investigation. Robb himself was not indicted, but three of his aides pleaded guilty to minor charges.

The most damaging blow, however, came in 1991, when a former Miss Virginia named Tai Collins told NBC that she and Robb had conducted an affair while he was governor and she was in her early twenties. Though Robb claimed he never had an affair and that the only woman he had "loved, emotionally or physically," since marriage was his wife, it didn't stop Collins from posing for an issue of *Playboy* that bore the cover line "The Woman Senator Charles Robb Couldn't Resist."

In 1994, as Robb ran for reelection against Iran-Contra conspirator Oliver North, the personal scandals grew even worse with the *Post*'s publication of a series of devastating memos written by Robb staffers who had investigated the various allegations. The aides seemed convinced that many of the old rumors about Robb's Virginia Beach escapades were true; one memo concluded that "Robb did engage in sexual relations, or oral sex, with at least half a dozen women." Robb's response was pitiful, presaging Clinton's legalistic distinctions about the definition of "sexual relations"—with similarly disastrous results. Asked to square the memos with his prior denials of infidelity, Robb explained to the *Post*, "I chose my words with care.... I previously said I hadn't slept with anyone, hadn't had an affair. I clearly did not limit anything more than that. I drew a line and stuck by that line."

Robb added that the matter wasn't anyone's business—but it was too late. The prince had turned into a toad. The whole premise of Robb's political appeal—that he was a man of virtue, a loyal soldier, a hero—was shattered. His robotic manner, which had once seemed evidence of his strict moral code, now looked ridiculous. And, when the character issue was turned against him, Robb had nothing to fall back on.

The country's ideological drift right made recovery more

THOMAS FUCHS

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difficult. Robb had stood out in the '80s as one of the few prominent New Democrats in the party—a lonely voice, along with Gore, Senator Sam Nunn, and a few others, against racial pandering, big spending, and military weakness. But by the mid-'90s New Democrats were a dime a dozen, and Robb was dwarfed by the hordes of big-name pols who cloaked themselves in DLC garb. Meanwhile, the same rightward drift that diminished Robb nationally was making him an ideological outlier in his state. In the early '90s, Virginia and other Southern states shifted hard to the right, toppling even moderate Democrats. November 1992 saw the ouster of Senators Wyche Fowler in Georgia and Terry Sanford in North Carolina. In the subsequent 1994 massacre, dozens of Southern Democratic House and Senate seats turned Republican. (It may have been Gore's good fortune that he relocated to national politics before the conservative wave washed across Tennessee, which in 1994 lost both its Democratic senators.) Robb, it became clear, no longer held a safe seat.

Robb barely survived 1994, squeaking by with 46 percent of the vote largely because of North's polarizing persona and an independent run by moderate Republican lawyer Marshall Coleman, which siphoned GOP votes. After the close call, friends urged him to remake his image, to develop a specific policy expertise and build a legislative record the way Kennedy had. "Some people told him, the only way to climb out of this whole thing is to do it through your career," says one Democrat who has worked closely with Robb. "Choose a couple of issues and make your mark . . . allow people to see you in a different way." But it never happened. Unlike Gore, who pivoted from arms control to the environment when the cold war ended, Robb never developed a legislative reputation on anything beyond defense and foreign affairs, and even in those areas he has left no lasting imprint. (Robb argues that some of his most important work is conducted in secret on the Senate Intelligence Committee. But the former Democratic staffer says the committee is less important than it sounds—a place where "they tell you just enough so that you can't say anything [in public].")

Instead of responding to his personal disgrace and brush with political death by developing a stronger policy record or a more accessible style, Robb seemed to withdraw even further from both his Senate colleagues and his constituents at home. Justifying his low profile to the *Post* in 1998, Robb said, "I've had more than my share of visibility in life, and I find I'm more effective if I'm not seen as trying in every instance to go to the microphone." But the Democrat who has worked closely with Robb has a different interpretation. He says that, after the scandals, "something in his focus seemed to go out."

In his current campaign, Robb is trying to refashion himself as a champion of education, prescription-drug benefits, the environment, and gun control, issues he hopes will resonate with swing voters in the Northern Virginia suburbs. But it's an edifice without a foundation: He hasn't been a leader on any of these issues. Recent polls show that, even on reliable Democratic issues like schools and the environment, Robb has no significant advantage over his Republican opponent, former Governor George Allen. Cognizant of his thin record, Robb has convinced party leaders to designate him a point man for school-construction bills. Says one knowledgeable Senate aide, "He grabbed the education issue as one he wanted a bit more prominence on for his race."

But Allen is far more formidable than North was. Limited by law to just one term as governor, he may still be best-known—or at least best-loved—as the son of a legendary Washington Redskins coach whose name he shares. Allen has jumped out in front in the polls, stressing his ideological moderation and running ads in which his happy, wholesome family is conspicuous. Robb, in a final irony, may lose his Senate seat to a handsome, moderate ex-governor with a famous lineage, a reputation for family values, and tremendous potential on the national stage—someone, in short, who looks a lot like the young Chuck Robb. ■

Why black people don't love the Bushes back.

Best Intentions

By FRANKLIN FOER

IT WAS JANUARY 1999, and a somewhat reluctant political operative had come to Texas to talk with Governor George W. Bush about joining his presidential campaign. The meeting was meant to allow the candidate to size up the prospective adviser, but it was the adviser who had the bigger doubts. He was squeamish about the Republican Party's "Southern Strategy"—its history of exploiting racial fears to win national elections. The operative didn't want to be part of that kind of enterprise.

But the governor beat him to the punch. "Let me tell you about myself," Bush said, launching unprompted into a monologue. "I've seen a lot of racial tension in my lifetime. In living memory, we've had cities burn. We need to deal with social problems. It's why I want to run." A week later, the operative signed up.

Tell that story to most Democrats and most reporters, and they'll probably roll their eyes. Jesse Jackson calls W.'s good-guy pose on race the "inclusion illusion." *New York Times*

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columnist Bob Herbert complains, "The Republicans still aren't interested in blacks. They are simply trying to present a friendlier, more moderate face." Many journalists don't think Bush is really trying to appeal to blacks at all—he's just surrounding himself with them in an effort to win over white women, in what THE NEW REPUBLIC's Michelle Cottle dubbed "the ricochet pander."

But there's a good reason to believe Bush's posture on race is sincere: It's a family tradition. During the late '50s and early '60s, few senators—not Al Gore Sr., not John F. Kennedy—had a better record on civil rights than W.'s grandfather Prescott Bush. The Connecticut Republican sponsored legislation desegregating schools, protecting voting rights, and establishing an equal employment commission. His son George led fund-raising drives at Yale for the United Negro College Fund. And when, in turn, George's own son George Walker was caught using the word "nigger," Barbara Bush washed his mouth out with soap.

In fact, the Bushes' problem on race isn't that they're insincere; it's that they're overly sincere. They're so convinced of their personal decency that they expect it to trump the deep, long-standing ideological differences that separate their party from black political opinion. Most Republicans take a hardheaded view of race: Blacks are Democrats, and there's not much you can do. The Bushes, by contrast, not only want to be loved by African Americans, they think they deserve to be loved—even when they hold political views that are anathema to most black voters. This combination of self-righteousness and naïveté creates a recurring cycle of courtship, disillusionment, and backlash. It marked President Bush's political career and is now clearly under way in George W.'s. But nowhere can it be seen more clearly than in the experience of W.'s more earnest younger brother, Florida Governor Jeb Bush, a man for whom racial politics has turned into an obsession, a psychodrama, and an utter disaster.

TO HIS CREDIT, George Herbert Walker Bush tried to carry on his father's tradition of racial outreach in the much less receptive terrain of his adopted state of Texas. Soon after arriving in the oil town of Midland in 1948, Bush pointedly invited an official from the local NAACP to his house for dinner. Later, as head of the Harris County GOP, he put the party's money in a black-owned bank. But he distinguished between his personal behavior and his stances on policy—support for integration may have sold in Connecticut, but it was a nonstarter in West Texas, and Bush couldn't make a political career without playing to the crowd. So, when he ran for Senate in 1964, he bashed LBJ's civil rights record: "The new civil rights act was passed to protect fourteen percent of the people. I'm also worried about the other eighty-six percent."

Bush's opposition to desegregation wasn't anything unusual among white Southern politicians in the 1960s. And his personal behavior was probably better than most politicians'. But what really distinguished Bush was his firm belief that the latter would override the former in the eyes of black vot-

THOMAS FUCHS

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ers. Years later, in his autobiography, Bush wrote that black support for his opponent in the 1964 race, which he lost by 300,000 votes, was "both puzzling and disappointing.... My hope had been that a Republican candidate might be able to break the Democratic Party's grip on black voters in the area."

When he ran for president in 1988, Bush once again genuinely expected to do well among black voters. Had he not supported fair housing legislation in 1968 and implemented affirmative action as chair of the Republican National Committee in the early '70s? But, of course, he'd also been vice president in an administration that opposed sanctions against South Africa and tried to restore tax breaks for whites-only colleges. And, in the 1988 race itself, he crudely stoked white fears with his Willie Horton advertisement.

Once again, the surprise wasn't that Bush took positions unpopular among blacks or that they responded by voting for his opponent; it was that he took the rejection personally. In 1989, months after he won the presidency, he commissioned a political consulting firm to diagnose African American perceptions of him. The firm suggested the obvious: He needed to improve his relations with black leaders and attend more "significant black events such as speaking at major black institutions like Hampton University." Bush redoubled his efforts to reach out, but in 1992 he once again utterly failed to win the black vote. Once again, the reasons were obvious—he wavered on affirmative action and offered no major policy response to the Los Angeles riots. And, once again, Bush seemed mystified.

IRONICALLY, AT THE beginning of his political career, Jeb Bush seemed more hostile to the black political class than his father ever had. A self-styled libertarian who subsisted on a regular diet of Heritage Foundation briefings, Bush kicked off his first gubernatorial campaign in 1994 by promising to beat "the government into submission." He pushed for a massive increase in prison construction, complained about welfare mothers, and vowed to end affirmative action. Bush's opponent, Lawton Chiles, accused him of appealing to "hate and fear" and branded his running mate, Tom Feeney, "the David Duke of Florida politics." But Bush, whose wife is Mexican, figured nobody would take such charges seriously. "In Miami, he'd integrated himself into the Hispanic community, with his wife and Cuban [business] partner. He thought that he could transfer that understanding to African Americans," recalls Feeney. "He was a bit naïve about that." At a televised town-hall meeting in Tampa, a hostile black reporter asked, "What are you going to do to deal with the African American community? Don't tell me about welfare!" Bush replied: "Probably nothing."

Bush paid a price, garnering only 6 percent of the African American vote and losing by a mere 63,000 ballots. "He took it on the chin," says Feeney. "That one response, 'Probably nothing,' cost him big. Fairly or unfairly, it turned people off. It might have cost him the election."

Like his father before him, Jeb seemed genuinely wounded by the turn of events. Tom Slade, then chair of the state Republican Party, recalls, "The defeat and the vileness of the campaign devastated him." Bush himself later said, "I felt bad that people felt the way they did about me. It broke my heart to see those things, because that is not who I am." And so, in the months following the election, Bush set out on a furious mission to refute the charges of bigotry. He began meeting with T. Willard Fair, the conservative head of the Greater Miami Urban League, and together the two opened a charter school in Liberty City, historic home of the city's black community and site of the infamous 1980 riots.

Bush also created a think tank that would primarily study the political leanings of African American voters. For a year, he watched focus groups from behind the glass, listening to Florida's blacks explain their views on issues like welfare, affirmative action, and school prayer. He published his findings in a report, writing, "Just as alcoholics must first admit they have a problem before they can begin to deal with it, so too must conservatives admit that the old ways will ensure the same dismal results."

When Bush ran for governor again, in 1998, he tried to put these words into action. He campaigned ferociously in black neighborhoods—praying with black ministers and addressing crowds after introductions from his friend Fair. He arranged scores of meetings with African American leaders, visiting them in their offices or inviting them to play golf. "He just showed up, and there are not many Republicans who do that," says State Senator Daryl Jones, head of the legislature's black caucus. "He was charming, but he was also a novelty." When Bush spoke to black audiences, he used carefully calibrated language. He referred to vouchers as "opportunity scholarships." He dropped the tough talk about welfare. And he avoided affirmative action. "It's a very sensitive issue, because it means different things to different people," he demurred.

Bush even apologized for his previous campaign: "Republicans have ignored the black voters of this state, and I was a part of that. It was wrong." It worked. Helped by endorsements from prominent black politicians and ministers, Bush's support among blacks rose from 6 percent to 14 percent. Bush took the increase as a personal vindication, a sign he had finally broken through the Republican Party's race barrier. "He showed that he understood there's an important connection between blacks and Republicans," says Bush's longtime adviser Al Cardenas, now head of the state party. "African Americans have a natural home in the Republican Party."

THE EUPHORIA DIDN'T last. In January 1999, Bush got an unexpected—and, as it would turn out, unpleasant—visit from Ward Connerly. Connerly, the black activist who had sponsored California's anti-affirmative-action referendum three years earlier, told Bush he intended to sponsor a similar initiative in Florida. It was not exactly what Bush, just a month into office, wanted to hear, and he publicly denounced Connerly's tactics as "divisive." But Bush—who still, after all, opposed affirmative action himself—figured he had better seize the opportunity and review the constitutionality of the state's racial preferences. Because of his newfound credibility with black voters, he thought, he could convincingly push through a reform or maybe even a repeal of affirmative action that blacks would understand was not racist and possibly

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even in their best interest. "He believed," says Tom Slade, "that he was in a unique position to end affirmative action on his own terms."

At first, it appeared the gambit might work. In November of last year, Bush unveiled "One Florida," an executive order banning the explicit consideration of race in admissions and contracting. It was a frontal assault on affirmative action, but Bush linked it to programs that he thought blacks might find preferable. He proposed investing $700 million in K-12 education and, more important, agreed to admit the top 20 percent of each high school's senior class into the state university system. Given Florida's sharply segregated high schools, Bush was, in effect, guaranteeing that minority admissions would *increase*. One Florida even won some early accolades from African Americans. Les Miller, the black Democratic leader in the state House, praised Bush for "taking positive steps toward protecting racial and gender inclusiveness." State Senator Daryl Jones told me, "I was prepared to believe him, because he seemed sincere."

But it didn't take long for the support to unravel; in fact, it took about 48 hours. Threatened with losing his position atop the black caucus, Jones quickly retracted his tentative support. "Our people fought and died for affirmative action," he later explained. Willie Logan, the black former Democrat who consulted with Bush as he cobbled together One Florida, told me, "You can't take away people's affirmative action. That's something they understand and get mad as hell about. I told Jeb that he'd get clobbered. He told me that it wouldn't be a problem."

It was. Within days, the national civil rights leadership descended on Florida. There were signs protesting PHARAOH BUSH and JEB CROW; Jesse Jackson denounced the plan as a "crucifixion." Part of the response was sheer demagoguery. But Bush had also miscalculated. He simply didn't have the credibility with black voters—and their elected representatives—that he thought he had. And it wasn't hard to see why. Sure, Bush had struck a conciliatory tone toward blacks in his 1998 campaign: He had made friends with all the right people and visited all the right places. But, when it came to actual policy, his platform had been largely the same as when he ran for governor for the first time. He was still for relatively strict welfare reform, school vouchers, cutting government spending—in effect, he was still pushing a typical Republican agenda. Bush's rhetorical shift had made some difference, but he had still won only 14 percent of the black vote, a percentage wildly out of line with his subsequent claims to have sparked a black political realignment. Bush and Florida's blacks remained on opposite sides of the ideological divide. And so when black Floridians saw Jeb attacking their community's most cherished issue, affirmative action, they turned on him with a vengeance.

It came to a head at a Miami town-hall meeting last February. Addressing the largely black audience, Jeb sorrowfully talked of his "heavy heart," telling the crowd that "this has been a difficult time for me" and insisting, "I've lived my life embracing diversity." The crowd just jeered. As he left the hall, friends say he broke into tears. "He had simply no idea that this was coming," says Fair. "I remember him calling me one night in a real panic. He couldn't understand why people would do this to him." Just like his father.

Politically, One Florida was a fiasco. Not only did it not turn black Floridians into Republicans, it cemented their allegiance to the Democrats. "The party had been pretty unhappy. One Florida helped bring us all back together," says Democratic State Senator Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

Indeed, Florida's Democrats look more formidable this year than they have in close to a decade. Their U.S. Senate candidate has a double-digit lead, they have a good shot at picking up House seats, and, most of all, they are visiting their One Florida wrath on George W. In one of the strangest ironies of this year's presidential campaign, Jeb, who most observers assumed would deliver Florida for his brother, may have become a liability instead. Bush and Gore are running neck and neck in the Sunshine State, and Gore has a shot in large part because of an energized black vote. As one Democratic operative told me, "For black voters, this election will still be about punishing George W. for Jeb's sins." Or, as Wasserman Schultz puts it, "If George W. Bush loses Florida, he might not be the only Bush in peril."

If W. loses Florida, he will almost certainly lose the election. And that would be a bit unfair—the animosity isn't really aimed at him; he's simply a proxy for his brother. But he's not a bad proxy. W., like his brother and father, is also fixated on proving his racial benevolence. In the campaign, he has surrounded himself with African Americans, visited numerous inner-city schools, and ensured that blacks filled the speaking roster at the Philadelphia convention this summer. His staff seems almost obsessed with the level of support he received among Latinos in his 1998 reelection bid and with his endorsement from Latino politicians like the Democratic mayor of El Paso.

And, once again, the goodwill comes with a fair helping of self-righteousness and naïveté. The Bush team consistently exaggerates W.'s share of the Latino vote in 1998—imagining a Hispanic realignment that this fall's vote will almost surely reveal to be a mirage. And Bush himself seems almost offended when critics note the racial disparities in Texas's criminal justice or health care system—insisting they have no right to judge what's in his heart.

But they're not judging his heart; they're judging his policies, and that's the distinction the Bush family has been consistently unable to grasp. W. probably does genuinely care about the welfare of black Americans—so do his brother and father. But the assumption that blacks vote for the candidates who show them the most personal goodwill is itself paternalistic. Black Americans, like other Americans, don't need to be loved by politicians; they want to be served. And the Bush family opposes the agenda of activist government and group rights that most black Americans, for better or worse, think serves them best. Indeed, the Bushes have not even tried to convince blacks that their perceptions of their self-interest are wrong. Instead, they have agonized over how to show blacks that they personally view them as equal to other citizens. But the best way of recognizing black equality would be to treat blacks like everyone else—as a constituent group that votes not on sentiment or image but on self-interest. Which is what black voters keep saying when they break the Bushes' hearts every election year. ■

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Two from Spain

AT THE START the camera moves up to a huge side of beef, flayed and open, hanging in a butcher's stall. Out of this raw beef emerges the face of the aged Francisco de Goya. Thus, somewhat puzzlingly, Carlos Saura begins **Goya in Bordeaux** (Sony Pictures Classics), which turns out to be, not a study or story of the 82-year-old Spanish artist in his final years of French exile but merely a perch from which to examine and "explain" some episodes in his past. Saura, a film-maker whose career (*The Hunt*, *Tango*, *Carmen*, etc.) has shown traces of similarity to Goya in flare and empathy and almost brutal energy, has opted here to write and direct a picture that would fit in the catalogue of any educational-film distributor. Unusually photographed and with some Saurian touches, it is nevertheless a sentiment-streaked, canonizing biopic.

We are told nothing of the reasons for Goya's exile in Bordeaux, nothing of the politics in Spain or his involvement in them that induced him, in 1824 at the age of seventy-eight, to move to a country whose language he could not speak. We begin with the old Goya in his bedroom, which tingles with blue light as the apparition of the Duchess of Alba appears to him, his one true love whose portraits are now museum treasures. And what does she want with him? She leads him down a white corridor into a busy street, where he is nearly run down by a carriage. Through this dreamy sequence, we are launched on a series of generally swollen incidents, stagy reconstructions of the life of a genius whose art is marked by, among other things, a passion for compassion and a search for the unreason at the bottom of disorder. Instead of those qualities, as is quickly made clear, we are to see a movie.

We get reenactments of moments and encounters that provoked some of his best-known paintings: from his meeting with Charles III and the resultant court work to his encounter with Velasquez's *Las Meninas* to the coming of the Napoleonic wars. But Saura's simplistic didactics are like a film about Shakespeare that showed him wandering in Eastcheap, encountering a fat drunk, punching his palm with his fist, and whispering "What an idea! Falstaff!" Between Goya's reminiscences and visitations, we return to Bordeaux for some scenes with his daughter and his last mistress, so the pattern is home-base-and-expeditions, a structure that in itself seems diminishing of its immense subject.

Intrinsically, the strangest element in Saura's film is his reliance on the theatrical. Walls of rooms change colors, people who leave a room are seen through suddenly transparent walls as they move down the corridor (transparent walls were very big with theater designers in the 1960s), and, most strikingly, a sequence meant to symbolize "The Disasters of War" in which the camera rolls past a series of tableaux against an obvious backdrop, the tableaux created by a theatrical troupe called La Fura dels Baus. It is like a grandiose pageant.

Vittorio Storaro, the cinematographer, continues his mission as an apostle of capital-B Beauty. (Here he gets the chance to rival the candlelit shots that John Alcott did for *Barry Lyndon*.) Francisco Rabal, who incised his way to prominence via *Viridiana* and *Eclipse* in the early 1960s, growls and imprecates along as the old Goya of this charade. Saura, who was born in the same province as Goya, Aragon in northeastern Spain, does disappointingly by his fellow Aragonese. The film doesn't enlighten us in any way. Not that we would expect new information, but it is barren of insight. It renders this turbulent life as a guided tour, and a sketchy one at that.

Another film from Spain deals much more simply with a less grand theme but an engaging one. **Solas** (Samuel Goldwyn), which translates as "alone," was written and directed by Benito Zambrano. It is Zambrano's American debut—and very welcome, too.

An incidental matter of interest for an American viewer of foreign films is to note the way that foreign cities and towns cling to their historical character while they also try to keep up-to-date. Much in the streets of Seville, where *Solas* is set, in the dress of the young people particularly, is identical to what we will see when we leave the theater. Where are we? we can think, allowing for the different language. It isn't until the film goes into an apartment house and we see the prettily tiled walls that we are absolutely sure—visually—that we are abroad. That wall proclaims Spanish Spain.

The title has more to do with loneliness than with the literal fact of being alone. The story concerns two women, mother and daughter, whose lives have been spent in inner isolation. The husband of the wife and father of the daughter, who is a middle-aged countryman, has come to the city for an operation. His wife, known only as Mother throughout, has accompanied him. She is not permitted to stay in the hospital, so she stays with her daughter, María, who has been in the city some years. The father, even while recovering in the hospital, is a mean-mouthed tyrant; María, thirty-five, a bit of a drinker and swinger, hates him because he wouldn't let her get an education. (She now works for a cleaning service.) Mother, taciturn, comprehending, solid, understands both of them and simply lives with both in the mode that is needed for each. But she knows that she is not really close to either.

María, who exists in a torn, angry way, discovers that she is pregnant, by a truck-driver who treats her more or less as a utensil. He suggests a means of getting a free abortion which she investigates but recoils from. She doesn't feel intimate enough with her mother to tell her of her condition, and she doesn't know exactly what she's going to do, except that she will have the baby. Mother's sole adventure in the city is to become friends with a lonely old pensioner who lives with his dog in María's building. Out of these elements, along with the father's rasping unpleasantness when they visit him—not because of illness but because of his macho role as king of the family—this affecting film grows.

Admittedly, part of its interest (as with the city) is that it is foreign: it has some of the travelogue appeal that many foreign films have. But even if *Solas* were set in, say, Cleveland, even if thus at first the story suggested soap opera, that suggestion would dissolve in the film's perception of character, its insistence on narrative spareness, and the acting, especially the daughter and mother. Ana Fernández brings so poignant a gray weariness to María, along with a slim persistence of hope, that the somewhat familiar character ceases to be a character and is a realized unhappy woman. The old neighbor,

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Carlos Alvarez-Novoa, vitalizes *his* somewhat familiar role. (Even his old dog does a new trick.) As for María Galiana, the mother, the simplest and best compliment I can pay her is to say that she often reminded me of Chieko Higashiyama, the mother in Yasujiro Ozu's masterwork, *Tokyo Story*.

Zambrano's ending is tinged with syrup, and we can suspect that it was a producer's requirement in order to get the film made (not a rare problem even among famous names). But what stays with us is Zambrano's double talent—a quiet and understated screenplay with directing to match. *Solas* marks an arrival. ■

Jed Perl on Art

The Porter Paradox

"A FEW DAYS are all we have," the poet James Schuyler wrote. "So count them as they pass." This attitude, at once eager for immediate experience and habitually valetudinarian, suggests the spirit not only of Schuyler's poetry but also of the work of a number of artists and writers who were, like Schuyler, coming into their own in the 1950s. Schuyler's poems, with their emphasis on times of day, meteorological details, and quick shifts in mood, are a way of counting the days—and the moments that make them up. So are the paintings of his good friend Fairfield Porter, who was fascinated by the random arrangement of a table after everybody had finished their meal, or the fall of light on a certain tree-lined street at a particular time of day. The best poems of Frank O'Hara, who was friends with both Schuyler and Porter, are pages torn from the diary of a hyper-caffeinated city dweller. And a related flair for the quirkily quotidian can be found in the work of other artists whom these men wrote about or knew: in Alex Katz's sly cut-out portraits of O'Hara and others; in Nell Blaine's casually opulent paintings of bouquets of flowers; in Paul Georges's vast, darkly dramatic paintings of downtown lofts.

Alex Katz and Frank O'Hara are probably better known than James Schuyler and Fairfield Porter, who are surely better known than Nell Blaine and Paul Georges; yet when I turn over in my mind a number of recent books and exhibitions, each of these figures is brought into sharper focus through his or her connections to the others. After seeing the small retrospective of paintings by Paul Georges that was at the Center for Figurative Painting in New York over the summer, I re-read the review of Georges's work that Porter published in *The Nation* in 1961, and was reminded all over again of Porter's acuity as a critic. The survey of Nell Blaine's work at the Cape Ann Historical Museum in Gloucester, Massachusetts (until October 28) includes her witty, calligraphic ink portrait of a bare-chested Frank O'Hara, and sent me to James Schuyler's art criticism, which contains a casually revealing essay about Blaine. O'Hara was the focus of a recent exhibition—"In Memory of My Feelings: Frank O'Hara and American Art"—which was organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and was at the Parrish Museum in Southampton over the summer; this included a couple of Katz's brilliant portraits of O'Hara, as well as one by Porter. There were two portraits of Schuyler in the show of Porter's work at the AXA Gallery in New York last spring. Porter wrote about Katz;and Katz, O'Hara, and Schuyler all figure to one degree or another in Justin Spring's impressive new biography, *Fairfield Porter: A Life in Art* (Yale).

The lyric informality of so much of this work can be a powerful come-on now, thirty-five or forty-five years after it was produced. An aspect of Porter's paintings and Schuyler's poems—and of works by Georges, Blaine, Katz, and O'Hara—is that they offer a kind of escapist pleasure. For an educated public that feels stuck in workaday lives, these paintings and poems that deal with an easy-going bohemian world full of attractive people can function as a kind of highbrow romance fiction. These painters and poets aestheticize the messy facts of life, and the clarity that they achieve has nothing to do with neatly filing experiences away. Like Virginia Woolf, Porter and Schuyler want art to catch what is most unexpected in life. And just as the unconventional forms of Woolf's fiction can seem to mirror the irregular sexual and social arrangements in Bloomsbury, so the strangely cropped compositions in Fairfield Porter's paintings can seem to reflect the complex shape of his life, with a wife who was a poet, five children born over a period of twenty-two years, and a flock of bohemian friends, many of whom were nearly a generation younger and with some of whom he was in love.

Woolf's diaries were among Schuyler's favorite books—he read them often—and there is a philosophical connection between her viewpoint and that of Schuyler and Porter and some of the other artists of the 1950s as well. The emphasis on the moment-to-moment flow in Woolf's novels signaled a rejection of what she and her friends felt to be the fixed habits of the Victorian mind. And the emphasis on the ephemeral, the atmospheric, and the impressionistic that you find in a certain strain of mid-twentieth-century New York art and literature signaled a rejection of the absolute structures and sweeping historical overviews that had characterized an earlier, messianic period in modern art.

THE BIG INTELLECTUAL shift in America in the years just before and after World War II is generally said to have to do with the turning away from Marxism; and Porter, who was involved in leftwing politics in the 1930s, is certainly a case in point. But the rejection of Marxist ideas of progress—which had, in any event, been well-advanced by the late-thirties—was also, at least in the artistic circles in which Porter, Schuyler, and Blaine moved, mixed up with a rejection of the idea that modern art was a single historical development, inevitably leading toward simplification, unification, abstraction. The informality of Porter's paintings and criticism is the product of a concept, an idea, a vision. This can seem paradoxical; and if Porter, by the time of his death in 1975 at the age of sixty-eight, was aware that many people did not know what to make of him, the ensuing quarter of a century has done little to clarify matters.

There is something aristocratic about Porter's non-conformism. The combination, in his paintings and his writings, of largeness of purpose, unabashed idiosyncracy, and clear-eyed audacity may recall European bohemianism more than the American variety. For a parallel to this powerfully original painter-critic, I think

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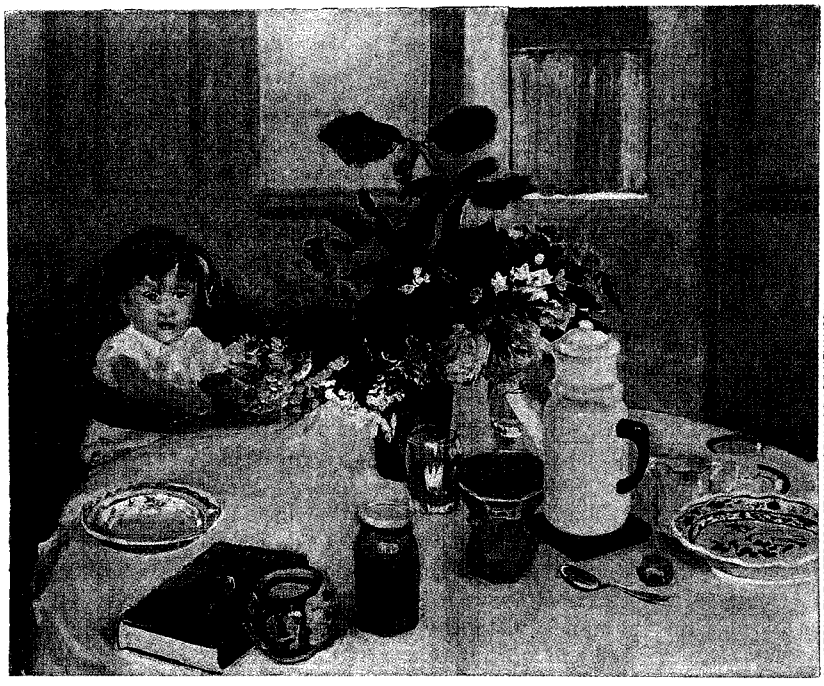
we need to look to the Englishman Walter Sickert, an artist whom Virginia Woolf praised as "a realist [who] is by no means a pessimist"—words that could also apply to Porter. Sickert, who lived from 1860 to 1942, is as little understood outside England as Porter is outside the United States.

Both artists were proponents of a nineteenth-century naturalism that they imbued with a personal lyric force through their increasingly experimental—and indeed abstract—paint-handling. They shared a fascination with popular imagery and popular life, which they indulged even as they cultivated their own ultra-subtle painterly tastes. There is a sardonic edge to Porter's delicately painterly representations of a cereal box or a parking lot full of cars, just as there is to the paintings after newspaper photographs that Sickert did late in life. Both Porter and Sickert wrote searchingly about their artistic passions, and each had his criticism collected after his death. (*Art In Its Own Terms*, the selection of Porter's criticism that the painter Rackstraw Downes edited in 1979, is still in print. Porter also wrote poetry, which was collected in a book published in 1985 with an introduction by John Ashbery.)

Porter's and Sickert's lives spanned several artistic generations, and they both fascinated younger artists and writers with an independence that seemed to unite a loyalty to long-running traditions with an unabashed eagerness to experiment, to renew. Osbert Sitwell, who edited Sickert's criticism, wrote that Sickert "adopted a rigid policy of following the truth, in whatever direction it might lead him". It is a judgment that could equally be made of Porter. Their discoveries—their truths—tended to be a few beats behind or ahead of the general pace of the great cultural centers where they flourished, yet their gift for being off-the-beat endeared them to artists younger than themselves, and leaves their achievements always ready for rediscovery, never quite easy to figure out.

Justin Spring's new biography is our latest opportunity to make sense of Porter, and in some respects his book brings us closer to Porter than we have been before. There has been an undercurrent of unease about Spring's book among people who knew Porter and the members of his circle. There have been concerns about how Spring would handle the private life of this man who in addition to fathering five children with Anne Channing Porter, with whom he had a deep and enduring marriage, was to some degree or another bisexual and for a time was very much in love with James Schuyler. But reading the book, which has an intelligently cautious and insistently unsensational tone, I have the impression that Spring was aware of all the pitfalls. Spring's biography does not contain unforgettable prose or analytical discussions over which you want to linger, but when I came to the end I felt that I could see how all the elements in Porter's life and work fit together. I cannot remember when I last felt that way after reading a new biography of an American artist. This book is a remarkable achievement.



COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

Fairfield Porter, "Lizzie at the Table," 1958

PORTER GREW UP in Illinois, in a very wealthy family. Although the money had pretty much run out by the 1960s, when luckily Porter's income from painting sales began to count for something, the family real estate business had already made possible the long years during which Porter struggled to find himself as an artist. (He did not have a one-man show in New York until 1952, when he was forty-five.) Porter was able to spend his summers on the family's island off the coast of Maine, and to buy and more or less keep up his big house in Southampton, a notoriously charming and messy place, full of paintings and books and interesting antiques inherited from various family members. Porter lived an amazingly full life. He devoted a huge amount of time to the early care of his first son, who was probably autistic, and we can see in his wonderful letters—which will be published soon by the University of Michigan Press—the warmth of his relationship with his grown son Laurence, who became a scholar of French literature.

Relations between Porter and his wife Anne—whose poems were published in 1994 as *An Altogether Different Language*—were close and complicated. She held things together in Southampton while he was in New York seeing shows or pursuing friendships. Their relationship was sorely tried by Schuyler's dozen-year-long stay in their house. (He came to recuperate from a nervous breakdown and never seemed to want to leave.) Such unconventional arrangements can look strange, at least from the outside. Porter must have sometimes been hell on wheels to live with, and Anne was surely long-suffering, and Schuyler, like many charismatic, unstable artistic people, knew how to take advantage of his friends. But these are rich relationships; and no matter how odd or impossible they may at times have become, the poems and the paintings that resulted tell their own story.

Porter's work is far more familiar today than it was when he died in 1975; and yet even after a major retrospective in Boston in 1983 and a number of smaller shows, the most recent this past spring in New York, his achievement remains difficult to summarize. In a way, though, that was one of his strengths—or at least it was something that he strove for, observing, in a statement prepared for one of the last shows he had in his lifetime, that "so far as it has merit, a painting is a fact, arbitrary and individual." Painting autumn foliage or heavy snow in Western Massachusetts, or the sloppy sidewalks of New York, or wildflowers, or portraits of friends, Porter is a fiercely intelligent man who is in love with happenstance, accident, propinquity.

There is a friction that develops in Porter's work between the informality of the subjects and the attentiveness of the artist.

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And Porter, a neurotic in love with the laid-back life, finds himself in that friction. He explores obsessively life's nifty, nothing-much experiences. He gives us an ever-so-slightly odd picture of an apparently easy-going world. But the oddity is never quite surreal. Instead it is something closer to the surprise of our own feelings—an unease that creeps up on us when everything is just fine, or a perfect contentment that we are unable to account for.

By the mid-sixties Porter had become a wonderfully agile handler of paint, but his painting is seldom easeful or "transparent." The mark of the brush is always a decision—an intellectualized painterliness, except that the thinking is so heartfelt, so ardent, that it registers emotionally. He painted portraits and figure groups, still lifes and interiors, landscapes, cityscapes, and seascapes. He jumbled genres—placing, say, a figure on a porch in front of a complex landscape. Stylistically, he is insistently inconsistent, going from painting to painting (and sometimes within a painting) through different ways of dealing with detail or focus. His mind always seems to be working overtime, and in his best work this intensity registers as a kind of generosity.

Porter's color is odd and memorable. He can catch the full light of a Maine summer or the grayed luminosity of a New York street. There is a shock to the hard-edged brilliance of some of these effects, as when in a painting done in Maine the light is so intense that the shadows on the facade of a white house become a sharp—almost cloisonnéd—yellow. Something that Porter said of Alex Katz's color, that it is "less found in nature than created for nature," describes Porter's color better than Katz's. (Porter may have been influenced by the younger artist.) In any event, what ultimately fascinates in Porter's color is less the way the orchestrations create a total effect than the competitiveness of individual hues—the daring, effulgent quality of this color. No wonder he could do so much with autumn foliage.

Porter's greens can be screeching and astringent, or lustrously recessive. He likes crazy, wild pinks, violets, and yellows. Some of these colors, laid on with his often thick, viscous stroke, seem to be delighted with themselves, like words that are used in a poem less for their descriptive power than for their independent, abstract fascination. Porter is a realist, but his color is that of an unabashed aesthete; and it reminds me of his passion for Wallace Stevens, whose *Opus Posthumous* makes an appearance in 1958 in an interior that also includes his young daughter Lizzie in a high chair and a vase full of flowers.

The most seamlessly beautiful paintings, which have an ad hoc gracefulness, tend to be small works that were often completed in one session. Such compositions, whether landscapes, still lifes, or portraits, can have a haiku-like power and precision; they demonstrate a kind of mastery that you expect in the work of a major artist. Yet what holds me the longest in Porter is generally not his notational precision in smaller canvases but the peculiarly unresolved quality of some of his bigger, stranger, and more ambitious canvases. This man who describes a painting as "a fact, arbitrary and individual" could certainly come up with some humdingers.

Lizzie, Guitar and Christmas Tree, done in 1973, is a painting so willful and over-complicated that I cannot quite like it and cannot quite reject it. Perhaps mixed feelings are the painting's true subject. Nothing in this painting, with its heavy, mahogany tones, exactly goes together: not the girl playing the guitar, the decorated Christmas tree that seems to grow out of her back, the odd, almost naïve foreshortening of the guitar case, the music stand, the pattern of the Oriental carpet, or the deep view into another room. Yet all this stuff does not exactly come apart, either. And I feel the same way about *July Interior* (1963), a painting of Anne lying in bed, in which her face is crowded around by the night table

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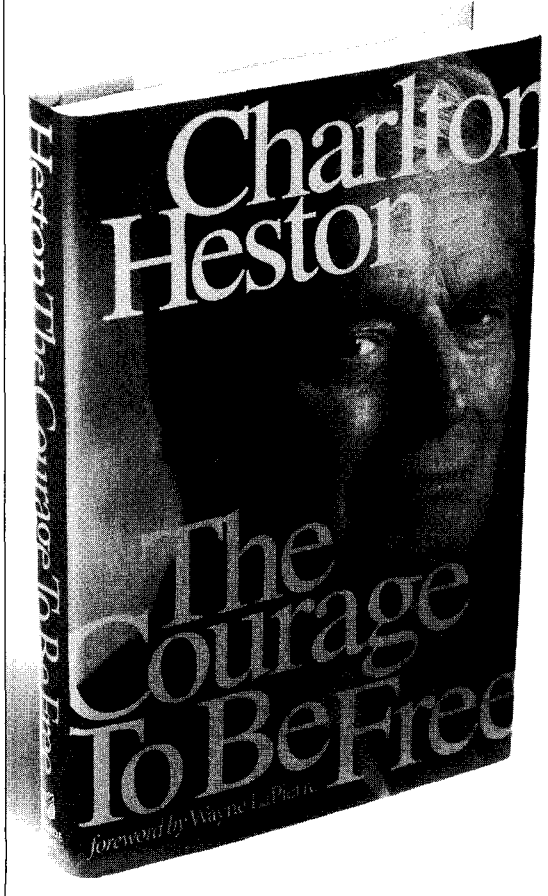

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with the telephone, her eyeglasses, the chest of drawers, books, curtains, the view out the window—all of which adds up to a view that, despite the strong daylight, has a strange and elaborately disquieting aura.

July Interior and *Lizzie, Guitar and Christmas Tree* may take us closer to the core of Porter's art than some of the larger, more conventionally ambitious multi-figure canvases such as *The Screen Porch* (1964), *July* (1971), and *The Tennis Game* (1972), all of which were included in the AXA show last spring. I like that Porter attempted these big, deliberately plotted compositions. Here he reaches for some overriding order—but coherence remains elusive. These ambitious failures have a way of interestingly emphasizing Porter's ambivalence about the very idea of the big picture, both literally and philosophically.

Porter's life, as related by Spring, illustrates to an amazing degree the principle that new patterns in the arts are frequently woven from the loose ends and remnants of older ones. The huge, eccentric barn-like house, elegantly classical smaller buildings, and ravishing vistas of Great Spruce Head Island, Maine, which are the motifs in so many of Porter's finest paintings, can be interpreted as an extended salute to his father, an amateur architect and avid naturalist who bought the island and built the houses when Fairfield was a boy. The combination of progressive-mindedness and strict aestheticism that Porter had imbibed from his parents fascinated the poets and painters whom he was meeting as a middle-aged man.

The bold, investigative spirit that Porter brought to nature was a reimagining—in a new aestheticized realm—of the analytical habits of the radical 1920s and 1930s, when Porter was part of a fact-finding trip to Russia, met Trotsky, and completed a vast mural on the theme *Turn Imperialist War Into Civil War*. Thinking of de Kooning, whom Porter admired above all other New York artists, Edwin Denby once wrote that what had interested him and de Kooning in the radicalism of the 1930s was "the peremptoriness and the paranoia of Marxism as a ferment or method of rhetoric." The forcefulness of Porter's criticism has something to do with how that rhetoric is reshaped to articulate sensations of surprise, intimacy, oddity.

The best of Porter's writing, much of which was done when he was a critic for *The Nation* for about two years, from 1959 through 1961, has a peculiarly engrossing, moment-by-moment way of shifting focus and emphasis. This is writing that seems to hold entire meanings in single sentences. There is probably no writer who has more beautifully articulated the extent to which formal values are psychological values. When Porter writes of Degas that he "chose to express the disorderly present with the orderly grammar of the art of the idealists," we see immediately how form can suggest an attitude toward content. I am especially fascinated by one of Porter's lines about the paintings of genre subjects by the Le Nain brothers, the seventeenth-century French artists who are so admired for their stark naturalism. "As Descartes proved existence by his own existence, validated in introspection, so these bourgeois artists proved art by their own practice, validated less by comparison to Italian precedent than within the paintings themselves." Here formalism—what is "within the paintings themselves"—becomes a kind of Cartesian introspection.

The delicate shadings that are characteristic of Porter's writing have given him the reputation of a charming if somewhat obscure critic, whose best writings are about weird, out-of-the-mainstream achievements, such as the boxes of Joseph Cornell or the welded sculptures of Richard Stankiewicz. No doubt about it, the writing has a lively, fine-tuned elegance; but in his own way Porter is as much of a dialectician as some of his old Marxist friends, and his elegant equivocations never quite obscure a sense of artistic rights and wrongs that was unlikely to endear him to the most powerful men and women in the anything-goes art world of the 1960s. Reporting on Pop Art, Neo-Dadaism and Happenings, Porter described the divorce of feelings from ideas, and of both feelings and ideas from the material of art, from the nitty-gritty of paint and canvas, which is where he believed everything that mattered in art would both begin and end. He complained that Pop Artists "are more interested in what they say than in their tools and mediums"; and he remarked of some work by Allan Kaprow and another assemblagist, Robert Whitman, that they "do to space something analogous to what Castro's four-hour speeches do to time."

Porter's great theme was the possibility of knitting form and feeling back together. This effort involved a kind of reverse dialectic, which is expressed in his writing through a constant play between different kinds of realities—the reality of feelings, of the world around us, and of the colors, brushstrokes, and forms that make up a painting. In Porter's day, the artists of New York were transfixed by the triumph of abstraction, but they were also well aware that abstraction was not new, and that long ago non-objective painting had been taken to extremes—by Mondrian, by

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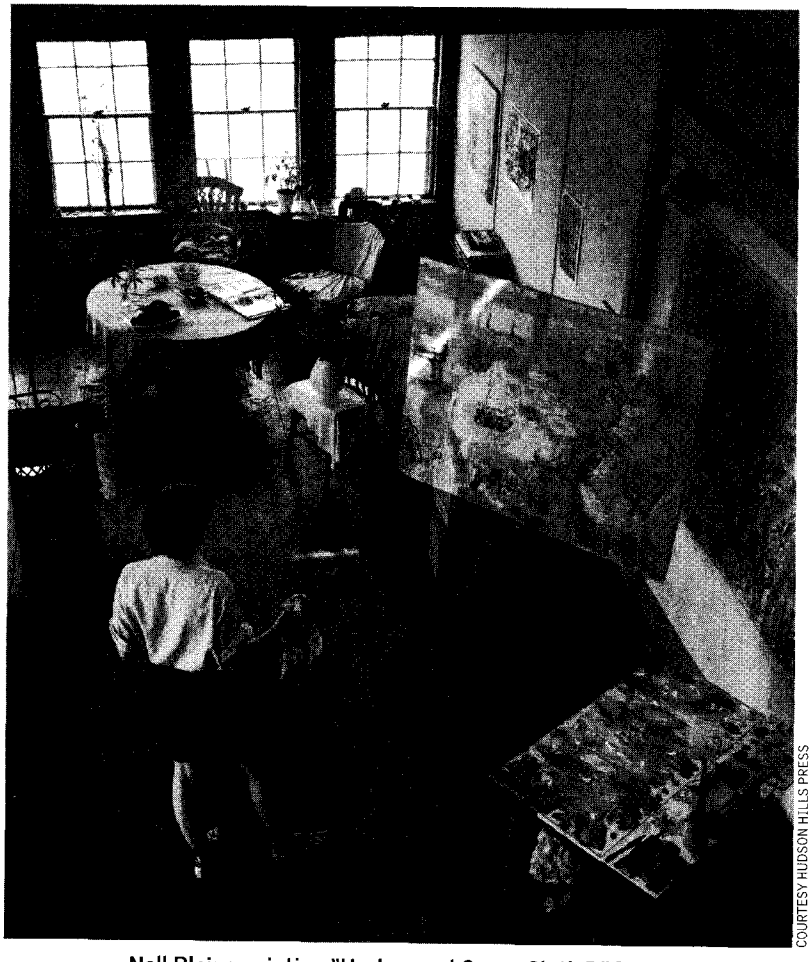
Malevich—that were in some sense unmatchable. The Abstract Expressionist painters of the late forties rejected the clarified, all-in-one emotions of Mondrian and Malevich in favor of what might be called the naturalistic emotions: rage, feverishness, turmoil, confusion, lust, ennui. By the late fifties it could seem that not only was naturalism a kind of abstraction, but also that abstract painting created its own reality. Porter's criticism—and his painting, too—is a sustained reflection on these delicious paradoxes. He writes of Joan Mitchell's abstractions that "nature is more 'really' present than in most representational paintings." And of Morandi, he says that he presents a still life or landscape motif "in abstract nakedness. It expresses idea rather than sensation."

THE SENSE OF abstraction and representation as twinned possibilities was something that gallery-goers could experience instinctively this past summer if they had a chance to see the retrospectives of paintings by Nell Blaine and Paul Georges. (The Blaine show, which is in Gloucester until the end of October, will be at the University of Richmond in Virginia, next spring.) Indeed, Blaine's *Imaginary View of Mexico*, a canvas from 1957, which is one of the largest included in the Gloucester retrospective, takes us back to a moment in the 1950s when many of the most sophisticated artists in New York felt that with each brushstroke they were not so much constructing a singular illusion as they were reasserting all the brush's variegated possibilities. Blaine's large canvas, with its overall terra cotta coloration, suggests atmospheric effects and geological formations; but as much as Blaine is thinking about Mexico, she is thinking also about evocation itself, the power of brushstrokes to wheel inward and create rough, circular forms or to align themselves in visual fusillades. The painting has an attractively decentralized spirit.

Many of Blaine's finest achievements came late in her career, when she brought to her paintings of crowded bouquets a trembling lyricism, a way of turning brushstrokes into flower petals that set in motion a kind of perpetual visual metamorphosis. She uses a related, fast-paced, quivering calligraphic touch to paint crowded table tops, the view of the Hudson from her Riverside Drive apartment, and the rocky landscape and harbor of Gloucester, where she had a summer place. Blaine—who died in 1996 at the age of seventy-four—had the modern artist's desire for clarity, but more than that she had a fascination with the kind of restless, mutable, flowing spaces that you find in de Kooning, or, looking farther back, in Monet's *Waterlilies*, which exerted such a fascination among New York artists in the late 1950s.



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Nell Blaine painting "Harbor and Green Cloth I," 1958

Blaine's canvases are all crazy animation. Some sketchbooks that were included in the Gloucester retrospective, with their quick, deft drawings of men working on road construction, of animals, of lush landscapes, are astonishing. Blaine's handwriting in the paintings has the improvisational abstractness of a jazz musician's riffs. When Schuyler wrote about Blaine in 1968, he spoke of her still lifes in almost musical terms. He saw "an unlanguorous rhythmic all-over pulse. It might all, almost, slip away, but for the harsh yellow centers of the cosmos that assert and secure, fixedly random as stars."

But what struck me most in the Nell Blaine retrospective was the gathering force of her color through the last thirty years of her career. She had always been an artist in love with high-flying colors; but whereas in the sixties and seventies the flashes of exuberant yellow or red were set in a quietly tonal environment, by the eighties, her shouting, pushing reds, yellows, blues, greens, purples, and oranges are arranged all at once, in landscapes and still lifes in which they each sing out without overwhelming one another. In an autumn view of her rocky Gloucester garden, the color has an off-hand glamour. There is a cozy hedonism about these canvases. The extravagant purple and red blossoms can make you do a double-take. Her brushwork surges. Her color hits a high. Her canvases have a knockabout opulence.

IF BLAINE'S paintings are about concentrated energies and the scintillating mood of a moment, Paul Georges's paintings describe expanding energies and sweeping emotional generalizations. While Blaine and Porter are realists who use the abstract brushstroke as an analytical tool, George's brushwork, at times no less abstract, is brashly utilitarian in its evocation of dramatic moods. The work in the small retrospective at New York's Center for Figurative Painting ranges from shadowy loft interiors done in the 1960s to some hilariously casual mythological subjects from the 1990s. I cannot think of another painter who comes through such gonzo painterly feats with his dignity more or less in place. Georges—who is seventy-seven—loves the theatrical machinery of earlier art, whether it is Rembrandt's golden chiaroscuro or Tiepolo's powder-blue empyrean, and he has no compunctions about appropriating these inventions. Georges's takeovers in his huge canvases are shameless, but the decisiveness of his brushwork gives his maneuvers an appealing honesty, which sometimes is even comic.

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Writing of Georges in 1961, Porter described his rare ability "to feel space in the sweeping gesture of spreading his arms. The paintings are impressive in their skill of handling and solidity, combined with a jarring color that holds its place." Certainly, there are no half measures in these paintings. His bouquets are scaled like small skyscrapers. His women take to the artist's-model role with a naïve Belle Époque sexiness that I would have thought had been repealed for all time by Bonnard's shy, skinny nudes. I have the feeling that these women who sprawl on comfortably upholstered furniture in wide-open landscapes beneath rococo skies would do anything that the painter asked. But Georges senses the comedy in his own machismo, and he can be unsparing of himself in his self-portraits. Georges trusts in the power of his brushwork; he believes in painterly painting, not as a pure or abstract ideal, but as an ideal nonetheless. His painterly authority will never quite clean up his entertainingly florid acts, but the tension in this work is authentic.

THE PORTER, BLAINE, and Georges retrospectives of the past few months would all have to be counted marginal enterprises, if judged by their modest sizes and off-the-beaten-track venues. (The Center for Figurative Painting, despite a mission that has the disturbing effect of walling off representational art, is an interesting new enterprise with a growing permanent collection. The AXA Gallery is a corporate-sponsored exhibition space which was formerly the Equitable Gallery.) Some would say that all this just goes to show that painterly realism is interesting only to a fraction of today's art audience. Others will argue, thinking of the not inconsiderable crowds that even on weekdays made their way to the AXA Gallery to see the Porter show, that there is a larger audience for this work than some museum administrators assume. This may well be the case. Yet it is not just the easy-going look of many of these paintings that places them at an angle to the art world at large. Everything about the artists who do this work—their sense of history, their theoretical foundations, their day-to-day procedures—unsettles the textbook expectations of late-twentieth-century art.

At the Nell Blaine retrospective in Gloucester, viewers were able to take in works painted fifty years apart, and what they saw was almost the exact opposite of the textbook models of artistic development. This artist who ended her days painting dewy flowers had painted *Blue Pieces* in 1944, a tall, succinct abstraction with clear-cut yet curve-edged red, blue, gray and black forms floating upward, their wavering contours almost—but not quite—bumping one against the other. This picture, in some ways as fine as anything Blaine ever did, demonstrates an astonishingly confident understanding of Constructivist principles, and would hold its own in a room of works by Arp and Mondrian. By now, of course, we are hardly unprepared for this reversal of art historical evolution that finds the abstraction in an artist's career preceding the representation. Still, we are scrambling for ways to describe abstraction and representation as twin possibilities that can exist in the work of one artist, of one imagination.

Porter, so far as I know, never painted abstractly; but his knotted critical comments about the constantly mutating relationship of abstraction and representation are an attempt to come to terms with this idea of twinned possibilities. Porter wants to re-examine, in a critical but sympathetic spirit, the animating assumptions of the avant-garde—the almost religious belief in the necessity for radical breaks and dramatically evolving styles. While I was thinking about Porter, Blaine, and Georges, I happened to see the exhibition "1900: Art at the Crossroads," organized by Robert Rosenblum, which was at the Guggenheim over the summer. (It was in London last spring.) "1900" was an attempt to survey the full range of painting that was being done internationally exactly a hundred years ago—at the very moment, in other words, when the avant-garde was entering what many people regard as its critical quarter-century. Although Rosenblum included more kitsch than was necessary to remind us that bad taste is eternal, there was a fascinating point to this show—a point that speaks directly to our understanding of what Blaine and Porter were doing in their work.

Rosenblum's generous selection of landscape and still life paintings suggested not so much that there was a pitched battle between avant-garde and rear-guard in 1900, but that there were a wide variety of considered responses to nineteenth-century developments. The majority of the painters in "1900," whether we now call them traditionalists or revolutionaries, were intent on assimilating ideas about the collapse of perspectival space and the increased importance of two-dimensional surface design which had originated all the way back with Ingres, Corot, and Courbet. A landscape painter such as Isaak Levitan is aware of the same issues as Cézanne; and if Levitan chooses to play with the intergrity of individual objects less than Cézanne, we may do well to regard this not as a choice between radicalism and conservativism, but as a matter of different emotional colorations or shadings.

While there are remarkable paintings by Levitan, he is no Cézanne. But that does not mean that every artist who radically changes the look of art has expanded the possibilities. In the case of Allan Kaprow's Happenings, Porter could see that this was self-evident and said so with considerable eloquence. From there, Porter proceeded to question the very foundations of the modern linkage of startling innovation and artistic quality. Porter liked to say that he preferred Vuillard to Cézanne, or at least that he was more interested in Vuillard's way of "unifying the Impressionist shimmer into a single object" than in Cézanne's way of "denying the essence of the shimmer by changing it into planes to express solidity." Porter's point was not to pit Cézanne against Vuillard but to suggest that each moment in art presents alternative possibilities: Cézanne and Vuillard in 1900, Dufy and Mondrian in 1925, Morandi and de Kooning in 1950.

What began to emerge in the 1950s—and it was a continuation of neoclassical ideas that developed in Paris around World War I—was an idea of the nonexclusiveness of styles, a sense of the constant presence in art of alternative possibilities. (This was nothing like the postmodern notion that anything goes.) Abstraction itself could suggest divergent kinds of expression. In the early sixties, the hard-edged paintings of Burgoyne Diller and Ellsworth Kelly presented a reconsideration of the generalizations of Constructivism, in the light of the loose-knit space of the painterly abstraction of the earlier fifties. But the appearance, at the very same moment, of new kinds of portrait painting—in Porter, in Georges, in Katz, in Louisa Matthiasdottir and Leland Bell—was another response to Abstract Expressionism, to its emotional expansiveness and to the lack of clarity that was often related to that extrovert impulse.

Porter's urge to nail things down in representational paintings was a way of registering his distaste for the brazen superfluidity of some painterly abstraction. Porter may in certain respects be a dissident figure, but he was reacting to what was going on around him, and so he was also a figure of his time. I would contrast the case of Porter with that of Alice Neel, whose portraits are the subject of a retrospective at the Whitney Museum that has been drawing big crowds. Neel's portraits, some of which depict art world notables, may have the fascination of gossip for many museumgoers, but as painting they are hapless. Her canvases represent not an independent response

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to the possibilities of her time, but a turning away from those possibilities toward a caricatural vein that is at once gratingly coarse and freakishly attenuated. Neel is not an independent; she is a crackpot, reheating over and over again a thin socialist-realist gruel.

Some people will be tempted to file Neel and Porter together, as realists, as portraitists; but this only goes to show how little those labels mean. We cannot do without labels, of course, but they are only useful to the extent that we are always ready to modify them. Forty years after Porter pointed out that Morandi's still lifes may be more abstract than Joan Mitchell's abstractions, we are still struggling to find a language—a way of thinking, really—that can account for our sense that abstraction is a reality among other realities. I do not mean to say that figurative and abstract—or generalization and particularization, or deep space and shallow space—are not values that artists embrace, choices that they make, sometimes to the exclusion of each other. I do think, however, that Porter was on target when he pointed out that all of these values and choices are more complexly intertwined in each moment than can ever be entirely explained. Nell Blaine often spoke of her paintings of bouquets in terms of abstract architecture. She was also a passionate admirer of Mondrian, and knew that we experience the verticals and the horizontals in his non-objective paintings as forms affected by the pressure of gravity as we know it in our daily lives.

What is needed, ultimately, is a new principle of artistic genealogy, one that plots developments not in terms of how forms look but in terms of how forms feel. We must learn to experience the distinction between abstraction and representation as only one distinction among many. As Porter struggled to articulate this idea in his writing, he was formulating the very principles that are needed to make a case for his painting a quarter-century after his death. I suspect that Porter's fascination with the instant—with a time of day, a passing mood, the perfection of a just-picked flower—reflects the hope of breaking out of the old art historical march, with its move from representation to abstraction, or from some other rigid point A to some other equally rigid point B. The emphasis in Porter's paintings on ephemeral effects, on always seizing the moment, was a protest against the one-track, forward-only theories of artistic evolution that threatened to relegate his own paintings—and those of many artists he admired—to the footnotes in the history books and the to-be-deaccessioned racks of the museums. ■

The crisis of medical training in America.

Why Johnny Can't Operate

By Arnold S. Relman

I.

Our present health care system has many deficiencies, most of which are by now widely recognized. One of the most serious, but least appreciated, is its failure to provide adequately for the training of future generations of doctors. No matter what is done about the other problems, good medical care is impossible without well-trained doctors to provide it. Yet the academic medical centers that are responsible for producing new doctors—the 125 accredited medical schools and their 400 or so affiliated major teaching hospitals—are being systematically starved of the resources to do so. The education of doctors is now being increasingly compromised, with possibly disastrous results for the quality of medical care in the future.

That is the disturbing message of Kenneth Ludmerer's important book. It has stirred up the academic medical community, as it should; but it deserves a wide public readership as well. No consideration of the future of health care in the United States can afford to overlook the historical facts laid out by Ludmerer, or the public policy issues that they raise. To set his powerful thesis in its proper context, however, we need first to understand the extraordinary metamorphosis of our health care system in the past three decades.

Arnold S. Relman, M.D. is the former editor in chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine* and professor emeritus of Medicine and of Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Time to Heal:
American Medical Education from the Turn of the Century to the Managed Care Era
by Kenneth M. Ludmerer
(Oxford University Press, 514 pp., $29.95)

During those years, especially in the past decade, our health care system has been transformed into a vast commercial market. Once considered primarily a social service and a public responsibility, health care is now commonly viewed as a private industry, best controlled by market forces. Painful experience in the past few years may be forcing a reexamination of that view, but as of now the issue remains to be resolved. For many, the free market recently has begun to look more like the cause than the solution of our current health care problems. Evidence of its deficiencies is accumulating, and public dissatisfaction with the market-based system grows rapidly.

Physicians, the essential providers of medical care, are also becoming disillusioned with market-based medicine. There is much reason for their discontent, because the market threatens not only their economic security but also their professional values and practices. Doctors are more unhappy than I have ever known them to be, in over half a century of experience as a physician, a teacher, and a close observer of the medical profession. Practicing doctors are a heterogeneous population of over 700,000 men and women, so it is risky to generalize about such things. Still, polls show that most physicians think these are very bad times for them. Moreover, they attribute most of their difficulties to the central feature of the new health care market: the managed care insurance companies.

These companies, mostly investor-owned, now control nearly all private health coverage, and a significant part of publicly financed programs as well. In all, more than 170 million Americans receive their care through private managed care plans. Most of them are enrolled in managed care plans by their employers, who usually pay the major part of the premiums. Managed care spread quickly during the 1980s and 1990s, because it promised to control employers' health

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care costs, which were escalating rapidly under the old system of indemnity insurance. Instead of paying whatever doctors and hospitals charged for each medical service, as in the indemnity system, managed care plans charged employers a set premium in advance for an agreed-upon range of benefits. If the employees used fewer individual services, the managed care companies would profit; if they used more, the companies would lose money.

By limiting contacts between patients and doctors, and by regulating the use of hospitals and specialized services, the plans were able both to control employers' health care costs and to profit handsomely. Managed care plans exercised control over medical services through contracts signed with physicians, and their members had access only to doctors who were under contract with the plan. The contracts not only also defined the terms of payment, but often regulated the procedures under which physicians could practice. Physicians, for their part, had no choice but to accept this arrangement if they wanted an opportunity to treat the increasing number of patients being enrolled in these plans.

In 1993, the newly elected Clinton Administration, having noted the initial success of managed care insurance plans in controlling medical expenditures, proposed a national plan to encourage this form of insurance. Rather than leave matters entirely to the market, the Clinton proposal included an elaborate system of regulated competition among insurance plans, most of which would be managed care. As a member of an advisory committee of health care professionals, asked by the Administration to review the proposed legislation before it was submitted to Congress, I had serious reservations about the bill. I thought it was much too complicated, and I was disappointed that it proposed nothing to encourage not-for-profit, provider-managed insurance and delivery systems. I believed then, as I do now, that commercialization and entrepreneurial incentives are a major impediment to viable health care reform. In any case, the defeat of the Clinton plan was a major political setback for the Administration, and it allowed, by default, an essentially unregulated managed care market to take over the private insurance business.

Note, however, that in controlling expenditures on medical services, the managed care companies were serving the interests of employers more than the interests of the employees covered by the insurance. Employers not only pay for most of the cost of the insurance, they also select the insurance plan or the choice of plans available to their workers. Employers, and not employees, are therefore the customers whom the insurers must court. This peculiar re-arrangement of the usual relationship between insurers and beneficiaries is one cause of the current consumer dissatisfaction with managed care.

And there is another, and perhaps more fundamental, reason. Before managed care, indemnity insurance companies were paid on a "cost-plus" basis, so there was no conflict between the financial interests of the insurers and the medical needs of the beneficiaries. Under managed care, the insurance companies are paid a fixed premium, and so they profit only to the extent that they can limit their payments for medical services. (The companies refer to these expenditures as "medical losses," an odd but revealing term.) A conflict of interest between insurers and beneficiaries is therefore inevitable.

"Patients' rights" legislation has been introduced to protect the public against some of the baleful consequences of this arrangement; but it can do little, I think, to correct the basic misalignment of incentives that accounts for the conflict of interest. Patients do not want any restrictions on the medical services recommended by their doctors, but the managed care companies obviously do. And yet most economists and health care policy experts profess to see nothing wrong with this system. Indeed, they have pronounced it to be the long-needed rationalization of a previously wasteful and unaccountable cottage industry.

Not surprisingly, the private managed care insurance companies, now wealthier and more politically powerful than ever, agree with these experts and are greatly pleased with the transformation. Their trade association, the Health Insurance Association of America (HIAA), is a potent lobbying force in Washington dedicated to protecting the industry's current control of the health care system. HIAA played an important role in killing the Clinton health plan, and it now seems determined to resist any reforms or government regulations that might threaten the business success of its members. The American Association of Health Care Plans is another prominent and influential Washington trade group actively promoting the interests of managed care companies.

Most of the money that does not reach the direct providers of care (mainly doctors and hospitals) pays for the increasing corporate expenses of the insurance companies and provides income for the innumerable new health care-related businesses now living off the health care system. These businesses supply a wide variety of services to the managed care companies, including such things as sales and brokering, public relations and advertising, financing, claims handling, utilization review, management of prescription drug benefits, case and disease management and information technology. Many of these new services are supposed to control unnecessary expenditures on medical care, and to make the system more efficient. Whether they do so is debatable. What is not debatable is that they have greatly increased overhead costs in the health care system.

Despite the predictions of free-market proponents, the managed care market has had little or no lasting effect on the inflationary rise in the total health care budget. It has simply shifted payments away from the direct providers of medical services and directed the money elsewhere. True, total expenditures were briefly held in check during the mid-1990s, but they are once again rising at near double-digit rates. The fraction of total private health expenditures that has been shifted to the corporate overhead of managed care insurers, and to all the other new health care-related businesses, is not precisely known. I would conservatively estimate it to be at least one-third of the total, or roughly $125 billion to $150 billion. Despite the claims of the managed care industry, there is no convincing evidence that this money has improved the quality of our medical care; and there is much reason to suspect the opposite. What is even clearer is that access to medical services is being restricted, and this fact is generating widespread public discontent.

No wonder, then, that the direct providers of care—the doctors and the hospitals—are so unhappy. They believe their ability to take appropriate care of their patients is being compromised by the cost management and the coverage decisions of the insurance companies. Their own overhead expenses have risen as they struggle to survive in a new competitive and commercialized marketplace, and to comply with the red tape and the regulations generated by multiple payers. Reimbursement for their services is being capped or reduced, while increasing rewards go elsewhere in the system.

The declining morale of physicians, and the economic constraints on medical care now imposed by the private insurance market, should worry everyone, not just doctors. More and more employees covered by managed care plans, particularly those with serious illnesses or injuries who need medical care the most, are concerned about their restricted health care choices and their limited access to specialized

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medical services. Lately, as the costs of premiums have resumed their former rate of inflation, even employers, who had initially demanded that market forces be brought into the health insurance field, are beginning to wonder whether the present system will last—and whether it should.

II.

MUCH HAS BEEN written and said about all of this. What most people do not sufficiently appreciate is that the private market has not only made it difficult for physicians to take care of their patients, it has also seriously hurt the academic medical centers and their associated teaching hospitals. The market does not treat teaching hospitals kindly, because they are much more expensive than their non-teaching competitors. Yet they are the wellsprings of modern medicine: the primary sources of clinical research and new clinical knowledge, and the places where the best and most advanced medical treatment is delivered. They care for a disproportionately large share of the sickest and most complicated (and therefore the most expensive) patients, as well as a disproportionate share of the uninsured. And they are the essential providers of medical education, the places where medical students and newly-graduated doctors (interns and residents) learn to become competent practitioners and specialists.

And yet our current health care system, now dominated by industrial practices and a Darwinian free-market philosophy, has little or no interest in helping teaching hospitals bear their heavy social burdens. Kenneth Ludmerer is right to worry that without viable academic medical centers and teaching hospitals, the future quality of medical care will be in grave danger.

In telling the story of medical education in the twentieth century, Ludmerer makes clear that the system of medical education was already in financial trouble for a decade or so before the managed care companies took over the private insurance market. Managed care compounded the problem and converted it into a crisis. The education of medical students is very expensive, and the earmarked funds to cover the costs had never been available in anything like adequate amounts. For most of the century, university-based medical schools had been responsible for the education of medical students; but the institutional budgets of those schools, even the strongest of them, were never large enough to pay the full costs. Schools had to bootleg money for this purpose from two other sources: federal grants intended to support research and research training, and public

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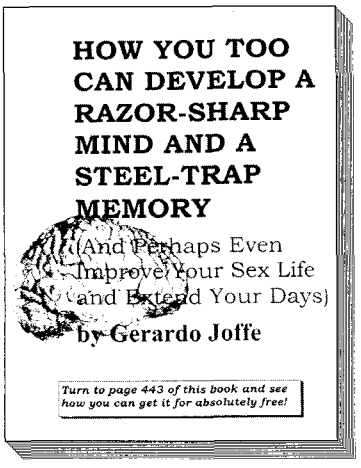
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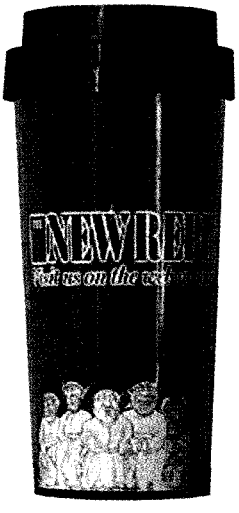

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and private payments to physicians on their faculty for the care of patients. In the same way, major teaching hospitals had always used these same sources—particularly payments for clinical care—to cross-subsidize the costs of educating their interns and residents.

But this strategy was doomed to fail. In the 1970s the policies governing research grants at the National Institute for Health were made more stringent, preventing their use for the support of clinical teaching. And in the 1980s reimbursement of physicians and hospitals by Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurers was cut back, reducing the clinical income that could be used to support education. Adding to the economic squeeze on teaching hospitals was the adoption in the 1980s of a system of hospital reimbursement that essentially paid a fixed amount per patient according to the diagnosis, regardless of the length of stay or the actual costs to the hospital. Obviously such a system of re-imbursement hits teaching hospitals the hardest, because clinical education and the care of the sickest patients require longer average stays and greater hospital expenditures. Payments by Medicare for the partial reimbursement of educational costs in teaching hospitals were also trimmed, most recently by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

DESPITE MAKESHIFT FUNDING, medical education had at first flourished in the quarter of a century following World War II. The academic medical centers of the United States had responded to the national call for more and better medical care by rapidly expanding and multiplying. They did more research and treated more patients. They graduated more medical students and produced a growing army of well-trained specialists and primary care physicians. To do all this, they used whatever funds were readily available, ignoring the danger of allowing medical education to become heavily dependent on outside sources that they could not control or even predict. In those halcyon days, when money for medical education was easy and seemingly unlimited, the academic medical establishment was content to live only in the present, with no thought for the future. This was perhaps understandable, but even after the makeshift funding began to decline and the threat to medical education became more clear, the leaders of the academic medical centers were not inclined to address the problem.

I feel qualified to make such an observation because I spent a large part of my career in academic medicine and was active in many of its national organizations. In 1984, I wrote an article in the journal *Science* entitled "Who Will Pay For Medical Education in Our Teaching Hospitals?" It was based on a speech before the Association of American Physicians, a leading professional society in academic medicine. I warned that makeshift funding would inevitably fail to sustain medical education and would eventually have to be replaced by public support. To justify that support, academic medicine should take more responsibility for addressing problems in the health care system of the United States, and be more accountable to the public for its actions. But at the time, leaders in academic medicine had other concerns. Most of us were too focused on the immediate needs of our own institutions and our own medical specialties to cooperate in seeking more solid support for medical education, let alone to work on solutions for the problems of the American health care system.

III.

THE ISSUE BECAME moot after the stunning events of the last decade. Advocates of the free market defeated the Clinton health plan, and market-based managed care quickly gained full control of private health insurance. The effect on the finances of academic medical centers was disastrous; survival became an urgent priority that took precedence over concerns for the quality of educational programs. It became impossible for academic medical centers to cross-subsidize educational programs as they had in the past. The critical problem was not only the lack of money, but also the lack of time for teaching. In today's health care delivery system, time means money; but for clinical education, it is lack of time to teach and to learn that is the most immediate problem. The title of Ludmerer's book underscores this important point. At several places in the volume, he compellingly details the importance of adequate time for teaching, and explains how managed care has made teaching time such a scarce commodity.

The best clinical education occurs at the bedsides of patients in the teaching hospitals. Traditionally, medical students, interns, and residents had time to examine and get to know their hospitalized patients, to participate in their diagnostic or pre-operative evaluations, and to observe the response of patients to treatment—all of this under the supervision of experienced clinicians, who were also faculty members of the medical schools with which the teaching hospitals were affiliated. But now, managed care pays these faculty members only for the clinical care that they provide, and the payments are not generous enough to support extra time for teaching. In addition, the faculty members are expected to see as many patients as possible, as rapidly as possible. Thus, even clinical care may be compromised, and teaching runs a poor second to that.

Moreover, one way managed care controls costs is to keep patients out of the hospital unless they are extremely sick, or require major surgery or specialized diagnostic procedures that cannot be done outside the hospital. When patients do need to be hospitalized, they are moved in and out as quickly as possible (the expression in the medical community is "sicker and quicker"), so that the average stay is much shorter than before. As a result, teaching hospitals, which always had a larger than average share of very sick patients, are becoming little more than centers for intensive care and major surgery.

In today's teaching hospitals, events move too swiftly and patients are too sick to allow time for the proper teaching of students. There is much less time for pedagogic discussion and instruction at the bedside, even if physicians on the faculty were available to teach. The result is that students in teaching hospitals see only brief segments of the medical care process, have less sustained contacts with patients, and receive less personal guidance from experienced faculty. Interns and residents, for their part, are so busy coping with large numbers of sick people that they have little or no time to read, attend teaching conferences, or even talk to their patients. Faculty physicians have less time to teach and their harried, overworked residents have less time to learn.

To save money, most diagnostic workups and preoperative evaluations are now done on an out-patient basis. This shift to ambulatory care also makes clinical education more difficult. Students and inexperienced residents usually are not welcome participants in such care because they slow things down and occupy too much of the attending physicians' time. The same is true of the routine care of patients with chronic illnesses in outpatient clinics. Managed care plans want ambulatory patients to be seen as briefly and managed as efficiently as possible. This leaves no time for teaching.

This growing disjunction between the new, largely out-patient-based health care system and the needs of medical education has stimulated a few medical schools and teaching hospitals to seek support from foundations and other granting agencies for specially designed programs that provide structured education of students and residents in managed ambulatory care settings. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has been notably active in this field.

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Yet such initiatives, however commendable, are little more than demonstration projects, unlikely under the present system to have a major or lasting impact.

Neither such demonstration programs, nor any other limited and local interventions, can solve the basic problem, which is that a market-driven, price-competitive health care system has no incentive to support a common social good, such as medical education. Indeed, all of the incentives in such a system work in the opposite direction. Managed care businesses, struggling to control their "medical losses," view education as simply a large added cost, which they cannot afford and which ought not to be their concern anyway. And whatever limited support the managed care industry might voluntarily give to education is more likely to be focused on training students and residents to meet the needs of the managed care system than on teaching the fundamentals of doctoring.

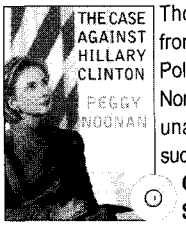
As Ludmerer so painstakingly documents, we are witnessing the dismantling of a system of clinical education that took the better part of the last century to build. In the last few decades of the century, the academic medical centers of the United States had become a model for the rest of the world in the way they had managed to combine patient care, clinical research, and education into a unified and synergistic enterprise. Under financial pressure from the commercialized health care market, this enterprise is now disintegrating. There is no opportunity to teach or to learn in a health care system driven primarily by cost-containment imperatives, and there is inadequate support for the extra costs of teaching hospitals that take their educational responsibilities seriously and also want to offer state-of-the-art medical care for all who come to their doors. How far the deterioration will go, and what its effects will be on the quality of our health care system and the competence of our new physicians, remains to be seen. Leaders of academic medicine, although still divided and unsure about the future, are now finally united in their deep concern about this issue.

Ludmerer calls the current transformation of medical education its "second revolutionary period." Under the old system in the nineteenth century, medicine had been largely taught as an empirical trade (which it essentially was) in proprietary, free-standing schools. There was no organized system of graduate education in hospitals, and most practical experience was gained through apprenticeship with practicing physicians. The first "revolution" began in the early part of the twentieth century, when the then-prevailing system had gradually been replaced by an intellectually solid, university-based system of medical education. Teaching hospitals, affiliated with medical schools, began to offer carefully supervised programs of residency training under standards established by national accrediting professional organizations. Academic medical centers arose at that time, and new ones continued to appear throughout most of the last century.

The new system was grounded in science and scholarship, and it was committed to advancing medical knowledge and educating physicians. These objectives set American academic medicine apart from the routine delivery of medical services in the community at large. Of course, academic medical centers provided medical care to people who were referred to their teaching hospitals, or who came to their clinics and emergency rooms; but the provision of the best possible care did not compromise their academic objectives. It was an article of faith, supported by much empirical evidence, that the quality of care was enhanced by strong educational and research programs.

In any case, these special functions made the teaching hospitals much more expensive than the others. So long as adequate funds were available (regardless of their source) to cover these extra expenses, medical centers could pursue their special purposes, confident they were fulfilling their part of a "social contract" that served the public interest. But the "second revolution" has changed everything. Pressures for cost containment and the imperatives of the market are causing the reemergence of an inferior educational system, resembling in many ways the system that had existed before the first "revolution" nearly a century ago.

If the United States is to retain its leadership in medical research and education, argues Ludmerer, the tattered "social contract" between academic medicine and the public must be restored. He concludes his book with a call for stronger leadership, and with some brief general suggestions for reform of the academic establishment that might encourage more public support. But these are little more than afterthoughts in an epilogue, lacking the richness of detail and understanding that characterize the body of his work. I do not mean to be too critical: this is essentially a work of history, and we should not expect too much in the way of policy proposals. Ludmerer has done a valuable service in describing and documenting the problem, and in making clear why the current system will have to be reformed. It is for others to propose and to implement the necessary reforms.



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IV.

Meanwhile, how have our medical centers been responding? Not very well. According to Ludmerer, "the organized effort and political will among medical educators to behave proactively did not appear to be great. The main emphasis was on expanding the clinical mission, even if that threatened to undermine the core principles upon which the academic health center was based. Critics who contended that medical education followed the flow of money, not principles, had evidence for that belief." I think that his description is accurate; and yet the response of the academic leadership is understandable, even if it is not always admirable. They are struggling to keep their teaching hospitals viable in an economically threatening environment. They are doing what they must do to survive, hoping that help will soon arrive and the climate will improve. They appeal for relaxation in the cutbacks in Medicare, with some modest success, and they ask for contributions to medical education from the private insurers, with no success at all.

This is hardly surprising, because neither government nor private insurers are interested in initiatives that will increase health care expenditures. Moreover, the huge budgets and the lavish new facilities of many medical centers make it hard for the payers to believe that the institutions are as hard-pressed as they claim. Payers also point to the fact that many centers can solicit private philanthropic support for their academic programs, while others can call on state appropriations. What both public insurers and private insurers seem to forget is that neither of these sources can come close to replacing the enormous indirect subsidies the teaching hospitals had received through the indemnity insurance system of the past. Public funding was largely responsible for the continued expansion of academic medical centers in the past half-century, and indirect subsidies have been essential in supporting them. Now, with the recent withdrawal of much of the support, the centers must adapt and improvise to survive.

To survive in a market-dominated health care system, the academic centers have had to do what any business in similar straits would do: cut their costs and increase their revenues. But cutting costs has meant reducing nursing and other professional and technical staff. This has increased the routine busy work and the clinical service burdens of the interns and the residents—not only compromising their learning time, but also raising troubling concerns about the quality of patient care. Even in the best of hospitals, when staffing is short and doctors and nurses are too busy, mistakes are more likely.

Financial pressures on teaching hospitals have also meant the elimination of unprofitable social and community services. To increase their revenues, more hospitals are aggressively marketing and advertising in an effort to attract patients and keep their facilities as full as possible. Hospitals, even those that are part of the same academic teaching program, are not as cooperative with one another as they once were. This increases the duplication of local services and facilities, as each hospital competes for its "market share." Top hospital executives in teaching hospitals behave like beleaguered businesspeople: they are paid large salaries, employ big administrative staffs, and are judged primarily by their financial performance. Their titles, language, culture, and behavior closely resemble those in American industry.

Indeed, they and almost everyone else who works in or with large American hospitals, even the most distinguished teaching institutions, now regard these hospitals as part of an "industry". Most stories in the newspapers about hospitals, even about not-for-profit hospitals, are now to be found in the business section. To blur the distinction between teaching hospitals and businesses even further, several academic medical centers have leased or sold their hospitals to investor-owned hospital chains, in an effort to escape the economic risks of the new health care market, and a few others have dissolved legal ties with their hospitals to allow the latter to compete better in the market.

Business philosophy has come to influence the teaching hospitals in other ways. Seeking new sources of revenue, many academic centers contract with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies to carry out clinical research. Such arrangements are not necessarily bad, if there are appropriate safeguards to protect the integrity and the independence of the teaching institutions and their medical staffs. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Medical staff involvement in such contract research takes time away from teaching, and financial connections with the sponsoring companies sometimes create conflicts of interest that affect the objectivity and even the credibility of clinical teachers.

The proliferating connections between teaching hospitals and pharmaceutical firms are threatening the integrity of clinical teaching programs through other kinds of arrangements. Sales representatives of drug firms have always sought to market their employers' products through visits to practicing physicians in their offices. In former times, most teaching hospitals discouraged such visits with the resident staff, believing that their own faculty, and not the pharmaceutical industry, had a responsibility to educate residents and medical students about the uses of prescription drugs in medical practice. Now teaching hospitals seem eager to cooperate with the pharmaceutical industry, because the industry not only supports clinical research but also takes part of the burden of clinical education off the hospitals' budget. Sales representatives are now welcome at most teaching hospitals. They attend and support educational conferences, are present in the operating rooms to advise on the use of their companies' new surgical devices, and they lavish free meals, free trips to medical meetings and all kinds of professional gifts on residents, students, and staff in exchange for the opportunity to hawk their wares.

The pharmaceutical industry is flourishing, and it has tens of billions of dollars to spend on marketing its products not only to physicians in practice, but also to residents in training at teaching hospitals. Hungry for financial support wherever they can find it, teaching hospitals are turning over increasing parts of their educational responsibilities to the pharmaceutical industry. The long-term effects of this dereliction on the quality and the rigor of the clinical education being received by medical students and residents in the teaching hospitals may be devastating. Physicians are supposed to be trusted and expert advisers to their patients on the effectiveness and the safety of prescription drugs and medical devices. They must be relied upon to judge the relative value of competing products. How can they fill this role if their practical education in the use of drugs and devices increasingly is sponsored by the companies that sell these products?

The growing problem caused by the academic-industrial relationship is resulting in serious ethical dilemmas for academic medicine. In a controversial editorial, Dr. Marcia Angell, the outgoing editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, recently asked: "Is Academic Medicine for Sale?" She provoked much soul-searching in the academic community, and a renewed interest in the issue of the federal government. A subsequent commentary by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala in the *Journal* indicated that the Department of Health and Human Services will be taking a much closer look at the situation. I hope that Shalala's promise will be followed by more stringent regulations. For the situation as it now stands is riddled with conflicts of

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interest.

It seems likely that the path we are following will be disastrous for the quality of medical education, and for the survival of strong, independent academic medical centers. Still, the problems facing medical education are simply a part of the much broader issues confronting the American health care system. None of the health care proposals now being discussed in the presidential campaign address any of these broader issues. What we need in place of the present commercially-oriented medical market is a not-for-profit community-based health care system that provides everyone with good and affordable care, while supporting medical education and the other infrastructure necessary to advance medical knowledge and improve the quality of health services. To make this change would be a formidable task. Even assuming that we decide to undertake the effort, it would probably take at least a decade to achieve. And yet without major health reform we are not likely even to preserve the present quality of medical care or extend benefits to all our citizens.

The good news is that the major hurdle is not lack of financial resources. We already spend in excess of $1.2 trillion annually on health care, or more than $4,000 per capita. That is almost certainly more than enough to provide decent acute and chronic care for everyone and adequate support for medical education, if the money were spent in a different, more socially responsive, and better organized manner. The problem lies in generating the political will to reform the present system. Opposition will come not only from anti-government and free-market advocates, but also from the powerful vested interests whose newly gained hold on the health care economy would be threatened.

All these obstacles notwithstanding, I believe that a major change is inevitable, owing to simple realities. Medical care is an essential human service. It must be responsive to needs and be governed by ethical values. It cannot be successfully distributed, therefore, by unregulated market forces. Medical education is a vital prerequisite for good medical care. It, too, as Kenneth Ludmerer's masterful history so persuasively demonstrates, cannot thrive in a market-dominated system. ■

The Prig as Hero

By NIALL FERGUSON

Lord Acton by Roland Hill

(Yale University Press, 523 pp., $39.95)

MOST HISTORIANS ARE remembered, if they are remembered at all, for their books: Gibbon for *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Macaulay for *The History of England*, to name but two obvious examples. In our own times, A.J.P. Taylor won fame for his journalism and his broadcasting; but his memory surely would have faded by now, had he not written three masterly books—*The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, *The First World War*, and *English History*—that still bear reading.

But Lord Acton's fame rests not on his books—not even on a book, singular—but on one aphorism: "Power tends to corrupt; and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Characteristically, it was not even a sentence that Acton intended to publish. As Roland Hill points out in this meticulous and absorbing biography, Acton wrote it in a letter to Mandell Creighton, the editor of the *English Historical Review*; and it did not reach a wider audience until 1904, when Creighton's widow published his *Life and Letters*.

Of course, Acton is supposed to be remembered as the editor—or rather the grand figurehead—of the multi-volume, multi-author *Cambridge Modern History* (not to mention the medieval and ancient histories that followed). Most college libraries have a set of those once distinguished volumes, now looking rather dowdy in their pale blue cloth covers. But nobody reads them. They are everything that modern students of history are encouraged to sneer at: preoccupied with high politics, elegantly written, and with

NIALL FERGUSON is Professor of Political and Financial History at Oxford University. His next book, *The Cash Nexus: Money and Power in the Modern World*, will be published by Basic Books in the spring.

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no tiresome summaries of historiographical "debates." Superb, in other words.

So it was lucky for Acton that the liberalism in which he believed so passionately failed so miserably in the twentieth century. For if there had not been such an abundance of dictators wielding absolute power, no one would have bothered remembering Acton's aphorism, and with it Acton himself. But are there other reasons why we should revere a man whose list of publications was so short that today he would certainly fail to get tenure? Hill does not quite persuade me of Acton's permanent worth as a scholar or a political thinker; but he succeeds brilliantly in making the case for Acton as an exemplar of high liberalism at its zenith. And this biography is so lovingly composed that it is almost impossible to resist. It is one of those rare works that breathes the nineteenth century.

ACTON'S LIBERALISM WAS interesting only in that he was himself a Roman Catholic. His great-grandfather, a doctor, had converted for love of a Frenchwoman, and this set the family on a cosmopolitan course. His grandfather became a kind of naval troubleshooter in Italy, and ended up prime minister of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. (Hence Acton's half-serious boast that he was not an Englishman but a Neapolitan.) His father, Sir Richard Acton, was a wastrel whose only notable achievement was to marry the daughter of the Duke of Dalberg, an opportunistic Rhineland grandee who had thrown in his lot with Napoleon, though at no lasting cost to himself.

If Acton's mother made him a fervent Catholic, it was her remarriage to George Leveson-Gower, the heir to the earldom of Granville, that made him a Liberal. It was Granville who insisted that "Johnny" attend a public school (Oscott) and—worse torture—take lessons from a dour Scottish tutor in Edinburgh, whose hard task it was to make the boy numerate, which Liberals had to be in order to defend Free Trade. When Acton was rejected on religious grounds by three Cambridge colleges, he was able to escape back to the more congenial Continent, where he was always happiest. Although he had inherited the family's English seat at Aldenham, Acton never put down roots there.

The dominant influence on Acton's life was the German Catholic scholar Ignaz von Döllinger, who was engaged as his tutor at the suggestion of his mother's glamorous cousin Countess Arco (whose daughter Acton would later marry and make miserable in lieu of her mother, whom he much preferred). Döllinger was one of the names a well-read Victorian liked to drop; Gladstone was one of his many admirers. The author of a strikingly balanced history of the Reformation, Döllinger was a somewhat ascetic but chatty, multilingual figure—that rare thing, a German whom Englishmen genuinely like. Thirty-five years older than Acton, it was Döllinger who introduced the young cosmopolitan to the history of the Church as a subject of serious study.

BY STUDY, ACTON always meant two activities: buying books and taking notes. His library at Aldenham was his pride and joy, though his expenditures rapidly outran the dwindling revenues of the estate. His voluminous notes—"thousands of slips and cards in black boxes," which are now housed in Cambridge's University Library—are the most substantial proof that he was a genuine scholar. (Though not a scholar above the odd howler, such as confusing Pius V with Pius IV.) It was just that Acton could never quite get round to turning the notes that he and his team of research assistants made into books. This was a difficulty often encountered by gentlemen scholars of his ilk.

"I really must write something . . . " was his frequent exclamation. As Hill remarks, the list of Acton's "dropped" projects was lengthy: "a history of the Popes; the history of liberty; a study of James II and VIII . . . [and] a work on the Reformation." Mary Gladstone was baffled by Acton's capacity for procrastination and rebuked him for it. He, stung, replied: "I have no other gift but that which you so pleasantly describe, of sticking eternal bits of paper into black boxes." When he was appointed Regius Professor in Cambridge, he observed wryly: "I am rewarded for my silence as others are for their writings."

There were, of course, distractions. The biggest of them was Rome, which Acton visited for the first time with Döllinger in 1857. This was the Rome of Pius IX, *Pio Nono*, once the liberal reformer but now—after the traumatic experience of the revolutions of 1848-1849—the dogmatic defender of Papal power. Soon Acton was mixed up with one of those high-brow, low-circulation journals that the Victorians excelled at producing: the *Home and Foreign Review*, intended as a vehicle for the views of British Catholic liberals. It did not take long to offend the Church hierarchy, and after not very many issues Acton agreed to close it down in order (as he put it) to "combine the obedience which is due to legitimate ecclesiastical authority with an equally conscientious maintenance of the rightful and necessary liberty of thought." This was the circle that Acton spent a lifetime trying and failing to square.

The watershed was the First Vatican Council of 1869-1870, which promulgated the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. The idea that the Pope could do no wrong Acton found almost—again, almost—impossible to stomach. It implied, in his view, a retrospective sanction of the "acts of a buried and repented past," including the Inquisition. Hill's account of Acton's role in the extraordinary wheeling and dealing that went on during the Council is outstanding. Suddenly it becomes clear that for a liberal Catholic, this really was a more important event than the contemporaneous Franco-German War, which interested Acton only because he thought the Italians might the seize the moment to snatch the Vatican archives. Unlike Döllinger, however, Acton did not get himself excommunicated for his opposition to Papal Infallibility. Somehow he always managed to avoid having to give a direct answer to the question, "Do you believe the doctrine contained in the Vatican decrees?"

ACTON'S OTHER DISTRACTION was British politics. In 1869, Gladstone secured him a peerage, after Acton had failed to get into the House of Commons. He hovered on the fringes of Liberal politics from then on, but never quite made the big time. For a fleeting moment in 1893, it seemed that he would be given a Cabinet post by Gladstone, but he was obviously past his political sell-by date, and he had to make do with a faintly Gilbert and Sullivanesque court job as Lord-in-Waiting. This meant humoring the elderly Queen Victoria, which Acton rather enjoyed.

There is much in this marvelous book that enlightens, and much that amuses. When Acton was obliged to live on his own at Aldenham, he had the greatest difficulty finding a suitable chaplain. One startled Acton by "preach[ing] about Our Lady—that we ought to pray for a fervid desire of leaning on those beautiful breasts." It was always a difficulty for a man like Acton that British Catholics were such a rum lot: either uncouth Irishmen or camp Oxonians. (He found the going even harder when he visited the United States in 1853: after a few days in New York, he "thirsted after a Catholic prelate.")

"If only all Catholics were like him," declared Gladstone ruefully. Acton could not have agreed more. He appears to have been a prig of the first order. Entirely typical was his exhortation to Cambridge students "never to debase the moral currency." His famous line about absolute power was part of a longer argument to the effect that "holders of power" should be judged by the same universal, perennial ethical standards as everyone else.

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And so they should; but the odd thing was Acton's unwavering certainty that he knew exactly what these standards were, and the vague implication that he himself never fell below them. Acton was a devout anti-Machiavellian. Wicked Popes appalled him.

His judgments on the living tended to be somewhat sanctimonious, too. "There is no seriousness or dignity in his nature," he sniffed after meeting Ranke for the first time, though he later had to revise his judgement of the man who became his "guide to all the original sources of modern history" (and who, unlike Acton, wrote and published prodigiously). When he was short of funds, however, Acton had no hesitation in becoming a paid courtier at Windsor, seriousness and dignity notwithstanding. "Cellar excellent, kitchen less good," commented the then corpulent scholar after visiting the Prince of Wales at Sandringham. Power corrupted, no doubt; but impotence evidently corrupted too, in its small way.

So Acton's appointment to the Regius Chair of Modern History at Cambridge—in succession to the unabashed imperialist John Robert Seeley—was a coda to his career. What was it about this afterthought that ensured Acton's fame? The fact that he was a Catholic? The fact that he gave riveting lectures "with the help of an egg in Martini"? It was neither, though both caused a stir. Acton owes his posterity, rather, to the distinctive quality of his liberalism, which by the 1890s seemed about a generation out of date, but was in fact ahead of its time.

In large part because he was both a Liberal and a Catholic, Acton was unusually wary of nationalism and the power politics that accompanied nation-building. Nationalism, he remarked in an essay on the subject written when he was just twenty-eight, "does not aim at either liberty or prosperity, both of which it sacrifices to the imperative necessity of making the nation the mould and measure of the State. Its course will be marked with material as well as moral ruin, in order that a new invention may prevail over the works of God and the interests of mankind. . . . It is a confutation of democracy. . ." Not many people talked this way in the time of the *Risorgimento* and the *Reichsgründung*. Yet Acton was consistent in his hostility to nationalism, which was of course the obverse of his own deep-rooted cosmopolitanism.

In the notes for the Romanes Lecture of 1901—which he was too ill to deliver—Acton reflected that though the discipline of history had outgrown theology, jurisprudence, and philology, it was still "much interfered with by politics". For centuries, history had been "national. People were curious about their own country—ignorant and indifferent about others". At the same time, national history had "done much to encourage the delight in war". Only "the history of ideas", Acton suggested, tended to "undermine national treatment—ideas are not national, like laws and customs". It was this kind of history on which he pinned his last hopes.

G. M. Trevelyan remembered Acton's "saying to me that States based on the unity of a single race, like modern Italy and Germany, would prove a danger to liberty." Trevelyan added: "I did not see what he meant at the time, but I do now!" To write the history of the later Italian and German dictatorships without condemning them—and Acton would surely have condemned them—was neither easy nor advisable. By comparison, the historicist approach—to understand (*Verstehen*) the past in its own terms, rather than to judge it—fell apart in the face of Auschwitz. "I carried further than others," Acton had once told a female friend, "the Doctrinaire belief in mere Liberalism, identifying it altogether with morality, and holding the ethical standard and purpose to be supreme and sovereign." Today, professional historians tend to shy away from such moral absolutes. Indeed, under the banner of post-modernism, there has occurred a covert historicist revival, which has left Acton's liberal legacy gathering dust on the library shelves.

To read Hill's biography is to have brilliantly illuminated what one had always suspected: that Acton was something of a failure, conceited and intellectually constipated. Yet Acton's exhortation to historians—to be liberals, and to judge past individuals according to their contribution to liberty—is quite pertinent, a still living legacy, when the alternative is the relativist claptrap which passes for historical scholarship in so many universities today. A prig Acton may well have been. But maybe the only way to write the history of the totalitarian "Popes" of the twentieth century—whose declarations of the dictator's infallibility had far graver consequences than Pius IX's—is as an unabashed liberal prig. ■

Knight Moves

By David Quint

Jerusalem Delivered by Torquato Tasso edited and translated by Anthony M. Esolen

(The Johns Hopkins University Press, 485 pp., $65)

"I dote on Tasso," says Gwendolyn Harleth in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, in an attempt to impress a country hostess of literary leanings. Mrs. Arrowpoint has written a "sort of romance" out of the early life of the sixteenth-century Italian poet, in which she explains the nature of his madness, his imprisonment, and his feelings for Leonora d'Este, the sister of Tasso's patron, Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. "I differ from everybody" on the subject, says Mrs. Arrowpoint—including presumably Goethe, who had rewoven the legends about Tasso's love for Leonora and transformed him into a Romantic idol in his play *Torquato Tasso*. But Gwendolyn is forced to confess her ignorance: "I know nothing of Tasso except the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, which we read and learned by heart at school." At which Mrs. Arrowpoint pounces: "Ah, his life is more interesting than his poetry."

Times have changed, though Eliot's gentle satire on those more interested in the writer than in his works still has a sting. But neither the legend of Tasso's madness nor his masterpiece, the epic poem on the First Crusade known in English as *Jerusalem Delivered*, enjoy the same stature that they did in the nineteenth century. Tasso, who was born in Sorrento in 1544 and died in Rome in

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1595, produced a vast literary output: a body of lyric poetry that was the finest produced in Italy in his century; the celebrated pastoral drama, the *Aminta*; treatises in dialogue form on a wide array of cultural topics; two other poems of epic length; and voluminous letters. But his fame always rested, rightly, on *Jerusalem Delivered*.

Since its publication in 1581, *Jerusalem Delivered* was read throughout Europe and acclaimed as the great modern epic, able to stand comparison with the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*. For three centuries, its characters and its episodes were part of a common cultural currency. They were painted by the great Baroque masters from Poussin to Tiepolo; and Monteverdi and subsequent composers from Gluck to Dvorak adapted the epic's plot and verses for madrigals, cantatas, and operas.

So why have Tasso's fortunes faded? A part of the reason, surely, is the Romantic rediscovery of the *Divine Comedy* and the rise of Dante, in the wake of the Risorgimento, as Italy's preeminent national poet. Most modern readers of *Jerusalem Delivered*, in Italy and outside, encounter it (if they encounter it all) as Gwendolyn Harleth did, in school, as a museum piece curated by a professoriat. But it is a magnificent work, a long poem of twenty cantos with the semantic complexity and coherence of a lyric, a Renaissance encyclopedia of the motifs and the ideas of earlier epic poetry, and an original and haunting poem in its own right. If Dante has become Italy's Shakespeare, then Tasso is surely its Milton.

TASSO SET OUT to write a Christian epic, and he chose for his subject a Holy War fought for the Holy Land itself. As he explained in the brilliantly reasoned literary theory of his *Discourses on the Art of Poetry*, now available in a fine translation by Lawrence Rhu, the epic poet should represent a modern historical event, but one far enough back in time and away from his readers' memories to afford him "the license to pretend." The First Crusade did nicely for his purpose. Tasso closely followed and artfully incorporated into his epic the accounts of William of Tyre and other Crusader chroniclers. He emphasized the importance of the Crusaders' siege machines and depicted the poem's hero Goffredo, or Godfrey of Bouillon, primarily as a general and a strategist. At the same time he indulged his poetic license to invent a second hero, Rinaldo, a mythical ancestor of the Este and a teenaged knight of superhuman force who is able, like Homer's Achilles, to win the battle and to storm the city single-handedly. And he made the historical Sicilo-Norman knight Tancredi, whom we know as Tancred, the second champion of the Crusader forces. Both of those warriors, of course, have the happy distinction of being Italian.

Written in the age of gunpowder, Tasso's poem meditates on whether mechanized warfare has made obsolete the valor of the individual fighting man—hence whether it is still possible to write a martial epic. By the backdating of its action to the eleventh century, *Jerusalem Delivered* can depict man and machine in a kind of competitive balance; and such an age was certainly not too late for epic poetry. In the fall of Jerusalem to the besieging Franks, moreover, Tasso found a subject that could be modelled on the primordial matter of epic, the fighting for Troy described by the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*. Since the Crusaders were knights, moreover, he could also borrow elements from modern chivalric poetry, especially from the immensely popular *Orlando Furioso* of Ludovico Ariosto, which appeared in 1516. Tasso incorporated Ariosto's fairy-tale marvels—magicians, witches, enchanted woods and gardens, wondrous flying machines and ships—into his historical epic. The poem is, in fact, a self-conscious cross between classical epic and chivalric romance.

The subject of the Crusade also served the contemporary ideological message of *Jerusalem Delivered*. The united front that Western Christianity had put up against Islam in the eleventh century was doubly topical for Tasso's own times. A new campaign against the Ottoman Turks had culminated in the victory at Lepanto in 1571. Even more pertinent for its resonance in Tasso's epic, a new effort, in the wake of the Council of Trent, was under way to reunite a Catholic church riven by Protestant heresy; the spirit of the Counter-Reformation demanded uniformity and obedience not only in religion, but also in all sectors of Italian culture.

Tasso makes the creation of unity both the moral issue and the aesthetic issue of his poem. Its opening stanza announces that Goffredo's main task is to keep together the army that God will shortly place under his command. In a pattern that recalls the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles in the *Iliad*, Rinaldo refuses to submit to Goffredo's authority, and defects from camp. Other knights also go AWOL, some seduced away by the beautiful Syrian enchantress Armida, who shows up with a phony damsel-in-distress story. Armida herself falls in love with Rinaldo, and she transports him to a magic pleasure garden in the Canary Islands—the Fortunate Isles. Goffredo must send out two knights to remind Rinaldo of his duty, and to fetch him back.

COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

Giambattista Tiepolo, "Rinaldo and Armida in the Garden," circa 1752

As the warriors stray on personal quests, away from the sacred goal of liberating the tomb of Christ, their knight-errantry smacks of sinfulness. When an army mutiny breaks out against Goffredo in the name of the absent Rinaldo, and spreads to England and Switzerland, the nations of sixteenth-century Protestantism, we are being invited to reflect on the peril of religious schism. The only answer is to put aside private initiatives and desires and to submit to Goffredo's single, God-given leadership. This, to its early readers, would have been a transparent

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allegory of the Counter-Reformation and its insistence upon submission to the unique authority, spiritual *and* temporal, of Rome.

Tasso's own argument in the *Discourses*—that an epic poem must have a single plot to which all of its episodes are subordinate, as opposed to what he called the multiple plots of Ariosto's chivalric romance that follow the adventures of individual knights—is part of the same message about the necessary subordination of the many to the one. Thus, in form as well as subject, what Tasso was writing all along was an epic of Catholic triumphalism. The great critical debate that would erupt at the end of the sixteenth century between the admirers of *Jerusalem Delivered* and the admirers (Galileo among them) of *Orlando Furioso* cannot be separated from such religious and political questions. The issue was not just literary. The preference for the more open form of Ariosto's romance, and for its multiple points of view, contained a nostalgia for the intellectually freer and less conformist culture of the Renaissance before the Council of Trent.

Recent criticism of *Jerusalem Delivered* suggests Tasso's own nostalgia for that earlier cultural moment. His religiosity and his worship of authority are real, but they are only a part of the story of his epic. Sergio Zatti, the leading Italian commentator on the poem, has shown how deep is its imaginative investment in the pluralism and the diversity of which it officially disapproves. For the zealous commander Goffredo is colorless in his austerity; and both victory in battle and religious rehabilitation come too easily for the superhero Rinaldo. One feels that Tasso identifies with the literally vulnerable Tancredi, who nearly succumbs in his physical and spiritual warfare.

Tasso identifies also with the defenders of Jerusalem, who, like Homer's Hector or Virgil's Dido, are clothed in all the glamour of the defeated: with the fierce Circassian Argante and the often-conquered but indomitable Turkish Sultan Solimano, who will, as he prophetically threatens, rise again. Tasso even shows sympathy for the devil, who describes his fall from heaven in exclusively political terms and paints God as a suspicious tyrant. (It is the defeated who are called rebels, he sardonically remarks.) Tasso's devil is an evident model for Milton's Satan.

Above all, Tasso has made the Eastern women of the poem lovable. They are its greatest creations: Armida, the mistress of artifice and the poet-figure whom Rinaldo loves and leaves, but with whom he is finally reconciled; the female knight Clorinda, a Xena-like warrior-princess, whom Tancredi loves but, in one of the poem's most famous episodes, fatally wounds in a ferocious nocturnal duel before he discovers her identity; the princess Erminia, who loves Tancredi from afar and without his knowledge, just as he loves Clorinda. The three characters form a triangle of missed erotic connections. Tancredi baptizes Clorinda at her death, and the other two women are ripe for conversion at the end of the poem. If, as Zatti brilliantly argues, the "paganism" of Tasso's epic encodes the humanism, the self-determination, and the sheer openness of possibility of the Renaissance experiment in culture that the Counter-Reformation was bringing to an end, then the ambiguous fates of Armida and Erminia express the hope that some of that culture's achievements and values can still be integrated (even if in a subordinate female role) into the emergent cultural and political order.

The strain of writing this great and self-divided poem seems to have told on Tasso. His behavior became more erratic when he had completed it in 1575 and 1576 and was engaged in revising and polishing it. He experienced anxiety and paranoia, though it is unlikely that he was really mad when Duke Alfonso ordered him confined in 1579, and kept him a prisoner for the next seven years. He had entered the service of the Este in 1565 with no real duties except to write his epic; and now that it was finished, his relationship with the family deteriorated. He experienced a religious crisis, and in 1577 he sought to confess his doubts to the Inquisitor in Ferrara; during these sessions it appears that he also charged various members of the Ducal Court with irreligion, charges that the Inquisitor treacherously passed on to Alfonso.

In the same year, Tasso fled Ferrara and visited his sister in Sorrento, but imprudently he left behind the manuscripts of his poem. The Duke refused to return them, but after some negotiation allowed Tasso to reenter his service, on much less favorable terms than before. After three months, the poet was on the road again, seeking a position in other Italian courts. He was still trying to obtain a copy of his poem when he came back to Ferrara in 1579 and vented his frustration in two furious outbursts in which he publicly denounced the Este. It was then that the Duke had him locked up in a fetid dark cell in a hospital for the insane, surrounded by the constant howling of the other patients.

After years in such circumstances, Tasso probably suffered some real mental disorder. His letters speak of persecution by demons. Still, he continued his literary production; and the treatises and poems of the period show no sign of diminished capacity. The terms of his imprisonment improved after the publication of *Jerusalem Delivered* in 1581, in an edition to which Tasso gave his grudging consent after a pirated version had appeared under that title earlier in the year. (Tasso had wanted the poem to be called *Il Goffredo*, after its hero.) One concludes, as Goethe intuited in his play, that Duke Alfonso's concern all along had been to keep the epic, as much as the poet, from leaving Ferrara, to prevent Tasso from revising his poem, removing the adulatory sections that glorified Alfonso and the Este family, and dedicating it to some other princely patron—which is precisely what Tasso did after Alfonso finally relented and released him from confinement, and he revised his epic into the much inferior *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, which was published in 1593.

Now English readers have available to them Anthony Esolen's readable and accurate verse translation of *Jerusalem Delivered*. Esolen copes admirably with Tasso's octave stanza and its *a-b-a-b-a-b-c-c* rhyme scheme. When possible he finds all eight rhymes, though more usually he settles for the *b* rhymes and the concluding *c* couplet. Tasso's diction proves more elusive. In his *Discourses*, Tasso describes some of the techniques that will create a magnificent high style in Italian: long sentences with multiple connectives, Latinate inversion of word order, enjambment, assonance, and double consonants or consonantal clusters in the rhyme words—a deliberate departure from the smoothness of Petrarchism. He is also the master of appositions and parallelisms that decorate and inflate the verse.

These features—grand, artificial, musical—would become the foundation of Milton's poetry, whose debt to Tasso is above all stylistic. Unlike Milton, however, Tasso has little sense of humor: his tone is almost unremittingly of a Virgilian seriousness and gravity. The continuously elevated diction of *Jerusalem Delivered* would be difficult to convey in the modern English idiom in which Esolen wishes to present the poem; and the Anglo-Saxon stratum of English in any case blunts some of Tasso's Latinisms. Occasionally Esolen slips in words of too colloquial and low a character for the decorum of this epic. "Mulish," "sluggish," and "botching" appear in one stanza and in words that issue from Peter the Hermit, the inspired prophet of the poem. To rhyme "Christ" with "heist" was not a good idea.

Still, when one puts these infrequent

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lapses and a few non-trivial mistranslations aside, Esolen's accomplishment is considerable. He rises to the challenge again and again at the epic's most memorable moments. His notes to the poem are helpful, though perhaps too freely interpretative and decidedly old-fashioned: he cites Tasso's early commentators, but not his modern ones. The reader without Italian can still turn to the great Elizabethan translation by Edward Fairfax, which is better poetry, if antiquated; or to Ralph Nashe's modern prose translation. But Esolen's verse rendering represents a decent compromise that many readers should now prefer.

GWENDOLYN HARLETH probably did enjoy *Jerusalem Delivered*. It is an entertaining poem, rich in episodes on and off the battlefield, and it immediately captured popular as well as learned audiences. Its most striking qualities are pictorial and histrionic. Here is a stanza from the most famous tableau of the poem: the embrace of Rinaldo and Armida in her garden paradise, as they are watched by the two knights who have come to return him to his crusader duty.

> From the lover's side there hung a
> crystal glass,
> shining and smooth—strange thing
> for him to wear.
> He rose and held it out between his
> hands,
> in the rites of Love the chosen minister.
> She with eyes laughing, he with eyes
> ablaze,
> in diferent objects see one object there:
> she sees herself in the mirror, while he
> spies
> himself in the calm reflection of her
> eyes.

It is small wonder that this scene was depicted over and over again in Baroque painting. It perfectly combines the experiences of theatricality and absorption that Michael Fried explored with regard to later eighteenth-century French painting: the voyeuristic gaze which the reader shares with the hidden knights on the carefully posed lovers, and the happy obliviousness of the lovers themselves, engrossed not so much in each other but in their own reflections, the "one object" that they ironically both see. Their mutual narcissism is accompanied by the reversal of gendered roles. The effeminized Rinaldo wears a mirror instead of a sword at his side; and the two glory alike, "she in command, and he in slavishness."

Tasso's censorious judgment is clear, but he also suggests that their sexual initiation is a step in the moral development of Rinaldo and Armida. This is an epic partly about the growing up of two self-centered teenagers, and it moves some way towards the subject matter later claimed by the novel: a kind of sentimental education, a *Bildungsroman* in armor. Rinaldo's experience of slavish subjection to Armida makes the individualist knight aware of his dependence on others, and prepares him to submit to Goffredo. Armida, too, falls in love for the first time, and by the end of the poem appears to be ready to give up her love of mastery—she has relinquished her magic—and to submit, in her turn, to Rinaldo and his Christian faith.

Armida grows up fast in the epic. Like Dido pleading to Aeneas, she begs Rinaldo not to leave their island love nest. She faints, and when she comes to, she launches into the impassioned tirade of an abandoned woman.

> "So he could leave me with my life
> in doubt"
> she said at last, "so he is truly gone,
> and like a traitor could not wait it out
> one moment, for small help. He gave
> me none
> in my worst need. And I still love him,
> and
> sit unavenged and weeping on the sand?
>
> "What good will tears do? Have I no
> more art,
> no other weapons? The devil,
> I'll follow him
> whether he hides in hell's profoundest
> part —
> not heaven itself will be secure for
> him!
> I'll catch him, take him, I'll tear out
> his heart!
> Bad men will see him hanging, limb
> by limb!
> He is the master of brutality,
> I'll beat him with his own arts. But
> where am I,
> what am I saying?

This is pure opera, and it would become the grand finale in the various operas that took Armida's name. A dissimulating actress who is almost always on stage in the poem, she is its magnificent prima donna.

It may require a taste for opera's extravagant passions and sometimes shallow splendors to respond fully to Tasso's art. The whole episode of Armida's garden, which Spenser would translate word for word into the Bower of Blisse episode of *The Faerie Queene*, reminds one of a Baroque stage set, both in its lavishness and in its magic unreality and evanescence. This an intended effect, since it represents the illusory and transient pleasures of the senses. Yet the mood of theatricality can also invest Tasso's poem with weight and power.

Thus, in the final canto, Solimano the Turk looks out on the armies clashing outside Jerusalem.

> Such the ferocity
> of the faithful and pagan armies' strife,
> when from a high tower, at a balcony,
> the proud Soliman viewed the fight
> far off,
> and viewed, as in a ring or theater,
> the bitter tragedy of human life:
> the assaults, and the fierce horror of
> death,
> the plays of luck and chance. It stole
> his breath,
>
> he stood a while abstracted, stupefied
> at that first sight.

The Sultan stands back from the fighting as we are encouraged to stand back from the poem and see the Great Theater of the World in all its insignificance and its nullity. This is a pagan point of view, of course: two cantos earlier Goffredo is allowed to see an invisible army of angels and saints working behind the scenes to bring the city down. But here, for an astonishing moment, *Jerusalem Delivered* opens onto a tragic vision.

Apogee

at the gates of the Central Park Zoo

This is the hour of least regard.

Shade closes over the cages, a jaded eye,
and the creatures kept
for the purpose of appearing to us,
who identifies them in their dark incarceration,
what tongue is there
to comfort them like a mother?

Only the street lamps shimmer beneath
the leaves, like lashes of eyes
tears shed from. My feet fall over
the low-mown grass like snow.

Whatever self there is must believe in itself
unseen as, in its first nights,
bewildered, it once believed in ghosts.

Christina Davis

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The densest symbolism of the epic surrounds the amazon-like Clorinda. She enters the poem to save the lives of two Christians accused of stealing an image of the Virgin Mary, which had been stolen in turn from a church and placed in a mosque. The episode recalls the story of the Palladium, the image of Athena that had to be stolen from Troy before the city could be taken. It becomes apparent that the virgin-warrior Clorinda herself is Jerusalem's living Palladium, and her death at the hands of the Tancredi who loves her seals the doom of the city. But her death is also her conversion, and in this, too, she becomes identified with Jerusalem.

For the city must fall to the Crusaders—and Tasso does not omit the massacre and rape of the inhabitants that he found in the chronicles—in order to be reborn as Christian. In one of the great recognition scenes in literature, Tancredi, himself badly wounded from their duel, learns the identity of his victim as he raises her helmet to baptize her.

> His hands were trembling as he undid
> her laces
> and over her face, her unknown face
> he bent;
> he saw her, knew her. And he could not
> move
> or speak. Ah, thus to see and know his
> love!
>
> He did not die, not yet, but summoned
> all
> the courage of his heart to stand on
> guard,
> holding his pain at bay. He gave her life
> with water, who had slain her with the
> sword.
> And while he uttered the sound of the
> holy prayers
> she was transformed with joy, and
> smiled; appeared
> to say, as filled with life at life's decease,
> "The heavens are opening—I go in peace."

It is a *coup de théâtre*, a deeply affecting and justly celebrated scene.

Yet its message is complicated by the fact that Clorinda and the reader have learned shortly before her death that she is of Ethiopian Christian parentage. The Coptic Church of Ethiopia was regarded in the late sixteenth century as no less schismatic from Rome than the Protestant heretics. It is not altogether clear whether Clorinda's baptism involves the conversion of a Muslim infidel, the enemy without, or the return to the true faith of a renegade or heretic, the enemy within. Which enemy scares the poem more? It does not really matter to Tancredi, who can barely be consoled for killing his beloved and is haunted in the next canto by the supposed ghost of Clorinda still lingering in one of the trees of a demonically enchanted wood—a horrifying alternative to the Christian afterlife promised by her baptism.

Perhaps Tancredi's experience suggests the bad conscience of Christian epic, of war and politics carried out in the name of God. It is hard to reconcile loving one's neighbor and killing her, spiritually liberating Jerusalem by physically destroying it. In his great poem, Tasso does not openly question the reigning ideology of his time, but his qualms are impossible to miss, and they are deeply embedded in his creation. So it is not only beauty that *Jerusalem Delivered* still holds for us. In our time, when the future of the Holy City is contested once again, and sectarian conflicts are on the rise, and a Tridentine spirit, a fear of internal dissent, has returned to the Roman church, Tasso's magniloquent epic still has something to say. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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to explain: "Taken seriously it would require the exclusion of virtually all fruits of custodial interrogation, since few choices to confess can be thought truly 'free' when made by a person who is incarcerated and is being questioned by armed officers without the presence of counsel or anyone else to give him moral support. The formula is not taken seriously.... Very few incriminating statements, custodial or otherwise, are held to be involuntary, though few are the product of a choice that the interrogators left completely free."

I agree with this analysis, and my book questions the relevance of "voluntariness" to a situation in which confessions are clearly the product of constraint. Where I differ from Posner is in my belief that the highfalutin language of the Supreme Court ought to be taken seriously—that we ought to think more about how we conceive of human agents who have fallen afoul of the law, how we want to treat them, and whether we want our system of justice to be as dependent as it is on confessions obtained in the secrecy of the interrogation room. Custodial interrogation is, after all, a system that has largely evolved outside the courts—a system created by the police that has resisted opening to real public scrutiny. It is striking that, for all the technology now available for surveillance, only two states (Alaska and Minnesota) require videotaping of all criminal interrogations.

Since, in Posner's view, "courts have not been successful in devising a standard that will determine in a consistent fashion when confessions should be excluded on grounds of involuntariness" (I quote *Rutledge* again), he proposes that the standard should rather be "to ask whether the government has made it impossible for the defendant to make a rational choice as to whether to confess." I don't see what is gained by moving from the traditional "voluntariness" test to a "rational choice" test. If confessions by suspects under interrogation rarely are wholly voluntary, neither are they wholly rational. They arise from situations of fear, shame, guilt, self-loathing; from a need to propitiate authority figures; from a desire to make an end to the constraint of incommunicado interrogation and find reintegration with friends and community. More than 80 percent of suspects waive their *Miranda* rights—the right to counsel and the right to silence. And most of them are among the poorest, least educated, least fully articulate members of society. "Rational choice" theory doesn't help much in considering how society should treat them.

Posner also claims that I present "no evidence that a significant number of people are being convicted on the basis of false confessions." I do discuss four cases of provably false confessions, and I refer the reader to the work of psychologist Richard Ofshe and criminologist Richard Leo, who have collected and analyzed many more. I'm not sure how many Posner would need to make up a "significant number," and it is of course impossible to assemble statistics on the number of convictions that result from false confessions, since most cases are never reopened.

I am not myself a criminologist, and I was not writing a policy book about criminal justice—though Posner seems at times to think that's what I should have written. Rather, I am concerned with examining our uses of confession in a range of social and cultural settings, to indicate the ambivalence of our attitudes toward confession, and to suggest that the Supreme Court's uneasiness about the production of confessions from interrogation needs to be taken very seriously indeed. I don't think we should abandon the ideals of Chief Justice Earl Warren in *Miranda* v. *Arizona*, but rather seek ways to make good on *Miranda*'s unfulfilled promises of protection to citizens who are suspected of crimes.

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TOKYO DIARIST

Rising Son

WITH ITS SEASIDE location and first-class amenities, the Oiso Prince Hotel, a luxury resort just outside Tokyo, is designed to lift one's spirits. But, for the Japanese businessmen, journalists, government officials, and academics gathered here for last week's "Democracy and Prosperity and the Rule of Law" conference, the ambience didn't have the desired effect. The American Embassy had organized the event as part of the Clinton administration's efforts to nudge Japan toward a market economy governed by law. But, rather than focusing on the merits of American-style capitalism, the Japanese spent most of the time lamenting the sorry state of their own economy and political system. "As a journalist, I feel hopeless about the future of Japan," one TV commentator confessed. "Japan has no venture capital," a business executive lamented. "In this respect, I cannot paint a bright future for Japan." Declared a retired Ministry of Finance official dejectedly, "Japanese politics has lost its direction."

ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE AS A guest of the State Department, I did my best, as did the other two Americans in attendance, to describe how America's economy works without appearing to propose that the Japanese emulate it. But we failed. The Japanese may hate their own system, but they are exquisitely sensitive to hints of triumphalism in others. "The Americans are arrogant," one professor commented after we finished our presentations. "Whatever is good for them is good for everybody else." Later, as we milled around a sumptuous spread of sushi, Peking duck, and rare roast beef, another professor sidled up to me and asked almost accusingly, "You think America is a great country, don't you?"

BUT, IF THE JAPANESE WERE DEFENsive, they were also curious—particularly about the presidential election. When I went to speak at the World Trade Center in Tokyo and at Nanzan University in Nagoya, my Japanese hosts asked me to explain how Al Gore and George W. Bush differ in their approach to U.S.-Japan relations. I had a simple answer: They don't. Since the summer of 1995, when the Clinton administration abandoned its managed trade strategy, both Democratic and Republican policy experts have focused on getting Japan to deregulate its banking industry and reform its political system. There isn't much difference between a Gore adviser like Laura D'Andrea Tyson and a Bush adviser like Robert Zoellick.

THIS SORT OF ANSWER MIGHT please Ralph Nader, but my Japanese audiences wouldn't have it. Indeed, after both talks I was peppered with questions meant to bring out the deep differences between the candidates: "Would Mr. Bush be tougher toward China and more respectful of Japan?"; "Wasn't the Republican Party the party of anti-Communism?"; "Isn't Mr. Gore obligated to the labor unions in the Democratic Party?"; "Wouldn't Mr. Gore be more likely to pressure Japan to reduce its trade surplus?"

THE QUESTIONS MADE TWO THINGS clear: Not only do Japanese political elites believe there are important differences between the two candidates on U.S.-Japan relations, they believe it because they are Bush backers! Part of Bush's support here stems from Japanese concerns about China. Many Japanese think the Clinton-Gore administration's Asia policy has been so sinocentric that it has ignored Japan. The Japanese are still annoyed that Clinton failed to visit them after his visit to Beijing in 1998. What's more, the Japanese read Bush's statements that he would treat China as a "strategic competitor" rather than a "strategic partner" to mean he would revive the cold war security relationship, in which Japan was the center of Washington's Asia strategy.

BY CONTRAST, THE JAPANESE VIEW Gore as a proponent of "engagement" with China. Even worse, because of Gore's AFL-CIO ties, they suspect he favors trade protection toward Japan. (The contradiction between Gore being both a China engager and a union mouthpiece doesn't seem to register.) "GORE TO GET TOUGH ON TRADE WITH JAPAN" read the headline above a *Japan Times* article on the Democratic convention. For an article on the Republican convention, by contrast, the paper went with "IF ELECTED, BUSH WOULD DOWNPLAY CHINA, TOUT JAPAN."

BUT IT'S NOT JUST CHINA AND TRADE that account for Bush's popularity among the Japanese. There are more subtle reasons. For one, most Japanese business and political leaders are closer politically and culturally to conservative Republicans than to liberal or moderate Democrats like Gore. They care about rice farmers and autoworkers, but in a paternalistic manner similar to Bush's. They don't like the Democratic Party's populism or labor militancy. Not to mention its feminism and multiculturalism.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, THE NAME Bush triggers fond memories in Japan (the vomiting-in-the-prime-minister's-lap incident notwithstanding). After all, during the Bush and Reagan years, Japan was riding high, America's economy was going down the tubes, and the Japanese felt *they* had a "great country." By contrast, the Japanese identify Clinton's reign with their decline—with eight years in which Japan has been mired in economic stagnation and political scandal. Thus, even if they know it's not entirely rational, the Japanese harbor hopes that a Republican return to power will return them to power as well.

I TRIED VALIANTLY TO PUSH THE Bush-Gore "Tweedledum-Tweedledee" thesis. On China, for instance, I told the businessmen in Tokyo and the academics in Nagoya that Bush's statements were just election-year talk. I reminded them that in 1992 Clinton had leveled similar criticisms of the elder Bush's conciliatory foreign policy with China, only to end up following his example. On trade, I conceded that if a recession were to occur, Gore would probably be tougher than Bush on Japanese automakers. But I told my audiences that if they worried about what Gore would do in a recession, they should also worry about what Bush might do in a boom. If Bush pushed his huge tax cut through Congress in America's current full-employment economy, it could create exactly the situation the Japanese fear most. The tax cut could spur inflation and threaten the value of the dollar against the yen. That would place Japan's exports at a disadvantage and reduce the value of its immense dollar holdings.

I MAY HAVE WON SOME CONVERTS among the professors in Nagoya, but not among the businessmen and former government officials in Tokyo. At the end of my luncheon talk at the World Trade Center, the moderator, a former official of one of Japan's main business organizations, thanked me graciously for my remarks. Then he reminded the audience that I represented a "very liberal" point of view. Karl Rove couldn't have said it better himself.

JOHN B. JUDIS

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The Truth

By Howard Fuller, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Education, Marquette University

Harvard University's Paul Peterson and David Campbell, Georgetown University's Patrick Wolf, and the University of Wisconsin's William Howell recently reported statistically significant test score gains by Black students who received school vouchers in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Dayton, Ohio.

Last week, The New York Times said these scholars "overstated" the gains, basing this claim on a press release from David Myers of Mathematica Policy Research. Myers is quoted as saying vouchers had "no impact" in New York. Let's look at the facts.

- A separate report, issued by Mathematica and co-authored by Myers, Peterson, Howell, and others, shows the same New York test score gains reported by the Harvard-Georgetown-Wisconsin team.
- On September 16, a colleague and I asked Mr. Myers if anything in the Harvard-Georgetown-Wisconsin report overstated New York findings. Mr. Myers said no.
- Mr. Myers later said that Peterson, et.al., should have presented grade-by-grade results for New York. This is a subject on which respected scholars differ. Such disagreement does not justify a public charge that the New York findings were overstated.
- Peterson, et. al., quote noted education statistician, Anthony Bryk, who says that conclusions about school impacts should not be drawn from "only single grade information . . . Judging a school by looking at only selected grades can be misleading. We would be better off, from a statistical perspective, to average across adjacent grades to develop a more stable estimate of school productivity." (Anthony S. Bryk, et. al., "Academic Productivity of Chicago Public Elementary Schools: A Technical Report Sponsored by The Consortium on Chicago School Research", March 1998.)

Parental school choice is widespread – unless you're poor.

Posted at www.schoolchoiceinfo.org is a table comparing the Harvard-Georgetown-Wisconsin findings with those of Mathematica and Mr. Myers. The findings in the two studies are virtually identical. The authors of both studies caution about drawing unwarranted policy conclusions from the New York results.

Moreover, the Harvard-Georgetown-Wisconsin report shows that test score gains for African Americans in Washington D.C. and Dayton are not concentrated in any grade level. These data reflect a much broader base of information than available to Myers.

Clearly, there is an emerging consensus among researchers about the generally positive impact of school choice initiatives on Black children from low-income families. BAEO believes this emerging consensus justifies continuation and expansion of school choice experiments for low-income families, along with continued scholarly study of the results from such experiments.

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Black Alliance for Educational Options

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for more information go to: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org

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